

# **PEASANTISATION AND DEPEASANTISATION AMONG THE BHUIYAN TRIBALS OF ORISSA**

**A Thesis Submitted  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**By  
SHUKADEB NAIK**

**to the  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KANPUR  
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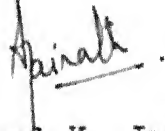
DEDICATED  
TO  
THE PAURI BHUIYANS

BUT FOR WHOSE LOVE AND CO-OPERATION  
THIS STUDY WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN POSSIBLE

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis "Peasantisation and Depeasantisation among the Bhuiyan Tribals of Orissa", submitted by Mr. Shukadeb Naik, in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance. The results embodied in this thesis have not been submitted to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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## SYNOPSIS

### PEASANTISATION AND DEPEASANTISATION AMONG THE BHUIYAN TRIBALS OF ORISSA

- A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Shukadeb Naik to the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur.

The on-going changes in tribal communities of India have been studied by sociologists and social anthropologists mainly based on a structural functionalist framework. The internal dynamics of the society is neglected and the changes are attributed mainly to external factors.

The present study is an investigation of four Bhuiyan tribal villages in Sambalpur district of Orissa, viewed as agrarian communities. The primary focus is on the dynamics of change from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture, the consequent processes of peasantisation and depeasantisation, and the nature of change in the structure of social relations.

Here peasantisation refers to the process by which a tribal switches from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture. On the other hand, depeasantisation is taken to be the process by which a peasant (a tribal practising settled agriculture) is alienated from his land. In the process of peasantisation, communal property is transformed into individual property whereas depeasantisation implies loss of individual property,

in this case land.

The major objectives of the study (discussed in chapter I) therefore are -

- (1) to identify the pattern of differentiation among shifting cultivators;
- (2) to identify the reasons responsible for emergence of privately owned settled agricultural land among the shifting cultivator tribals;
- (3) to compare the nature of social relationships among tribals practising shifting cultivation and settled agriculture respectively;
- (4) to examine the position of settled agriculturist tribals when they live among non-tribals; and
- (5) to examine the process of change in social relationships in all the villages in terms of ceremonial friendship to patron-client relationship and then to class antagonism.

We studied four villages for our work. First, Biringapu a Bhuiyan tribal village, comprising 28 households, situated in the hills, where they engage predominantly in shifting cultivation with food gathering and hunting. The second, Mishapur, comprising 46 households, again a Bhuiyan tribal village in the hills where they practise shifting cultivation and settled agriculture with the allied activities like in the first one. The differences between these two villages are -

the tribals of the first village clear the jungle for shifting cultivation on the basis of labour power of family, whereas in the second one the distribution is equal, irrespective of the labour power of the families; the first village is far off from the plains with little communication facility whereas the second one is nearer with better communication facility; the private ownership of settled land is found in the second village whereas in the first village this is absent; the adherence to food gathering and hunting is less in the second village than the first one and above all the first village maintains more of tribal culture in terms of youth dormitory, scattered settlement pattern, usage of tribal dialect etc. than the second village.

The third village Chaasapur comprising 111 households is a multi-caste and multi-tribal one situated at the foot hills. The villagers practise only settled agriculture.

The fourth village, Sarkarnur consisting of 26 households is a multi-tribal one, situated in the plains, and the villagers practise only settled agriculture. It was established by the government to stop shifting cultivation and the tribals are drawn from nearby areas and is considered as a hamlet of the third village.

The study is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter II describes the selection of the four villages under study and outlines the methodology including the primary and secondary sources of data.

Historical factors like the role of the British government and the kings of the Bamra state, under which our villages were administered, are described in chapter III. Especially, the "carrot and stick" policy of the colonial rulers is discussed.

Shifting cultivation is a labour intensive agricultural practice. Various types of agricultural operations of the swidden land and types of swidden land are described in chapter IV. Along with this, other allied economic activities like food gathering, hunting and wage labour under the jungle contractors are also presented.

In chapter V, the process of 'peasantisation' among the Bhuiyans of Biringapur and Mishapur is discussed. The differentiation among the shifting cultivators is demonstrated on the basis of the distribution of swidden land, ownership of various metal implements, and also the privileges enjoyed by the 'elites' of both the villages. The mechanism of transformation from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture is examined in detail.

The process of depeasantisation in Chaasapur and Sarkarpur is analysed in chapter VI. The arrival of members of the caste

Chasa from the plains to Chaasapur, which was originally a Bhuiyan village, changed the land use pattern. The process of depeasantisation is analysed on the basis of moneylending and the land transfer from the poor including the Bhuiyans.

Chapter VII examines the egalitarian nature of ceremonial friendships amongst the Bhuiyans and shows how the outsiders enter into these ritual friendships with them and then transforms these traditionally egalitarian bonds into exploitative patron-client relations.

First of all, a community of shifting cultivators experiences strain with the growth of population and, consequently, exhaustion and contraction of forest land available for cultivation. It results in reduction of the fallow period, more intensive cultivation, for example, of the third patch and a change in the pattern of distribution of communal land. As distinctly seen from our study, distribution of land on the basis of family labour-power changes into distribution of equal amount of land, irrespective of family labour-power, thus introducing a source of differentiation as the pressure on land builds up. The compulsion to intensify the use of land ultimately leads to preparation of land for settled agriculture. Simultaneously the production process and technological apparatus undergoes a transformation.

This transition from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture takes place with the background of a system of stratification on the basis of the original settlement and migration pattern of the respective villages. Village elites, generated on this basis, devise mechanisms of appropriating surplus labour of others and take control over the best land, both for shifting cultivation and settled agriculture, as seen in the case of Biringapur and Mishapur.

Thus we find that the transition from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture is inevitable, irrespective of any external factors. As the process of peasantisation advances through this mechanism, the tribal communities become increasingly differentiated. The "carrot and stick" policy of the colonial government, also followed by the state government in Independent India, applied external pressure only to accelerate the pace of the transition.

As the tribal communities "advanced", they attracted outsiders who were lured by their labour, forest produce, domestic animals and potential for trade and moneylending. The Bhuiyans make themselves accessible when the outsiders establish the ritual ceremonial friendship with them. This relatively egalitarian relationship is craftily and gradually transformed into an inegalitarian patron-client relation through which 'friendly gifts move primarily one way i.e., away from the Bhuiyans. Interestingly, as the Bhuiyans themselves get

increasingly differentiated, their relationships within the community tend to look increasingly like the patron-client relations. Differentiation and, therefore, contradictions within the Bhuiyans make entry of the outsiders more smooth. Gradually the Bhuiyan community begins to look like the "advanced" tribals and non-tribals of the adjoining plains. They share the process of depeasantisation with these latter communities.

The process of depeasantisation can be seen clearly in our villages of Chaasapur and Sarkarpur. Here, the process is akin to other agrarian communities in underdeveloped countries. It is pauperisation rather than proletarianisation which is taking place.

The reverberations of this situation have already reached back to Biringapur and Mishapur, where the Bhuiyans are gradually refusing to enter into ceremonial friendships which, in fact, are more like patron-client relations. Indeed, this will have significant implications for social relations within the structure of hill communities of the Bhuiyans.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The interest of the sociologists and social anthropologists in the study of tribal societies as agrarian communities is of recent origin in India. Though the primary aim of most of the studies dealing with tribal societies is to see the changing socio-economic and political situation of the various tribal communities in India, the researchers tend to focus their attention primarily on tradition and custom, and try to "demonstrate the non-existence of any differentiation amongst the tribal population" (Pathy, 1978: 2 ). But recently, in 1980s, a few young scholars have drifted away from the 'main stream anthropology'<sup>1</sup> while criticizing the earlier tradition in tribal studies (see Pathy, 1982: 46).

Increasingly, the established paradigms are being questioned. "Paradigms in anthropology are infact political rather than scientific" (Cohn, 1980: 208). Thus during the colonial regime, Indian anthropology was Anglo-saxon. After

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1. The term mainstream anthropology is borrowed from Scheffler, Ted L. (1981: 165-169) Scheffler describes it as, "description and diary keeping which alludes to an orientation of stasis, equilibrium.....".



Independence, it is Anglo-American (Pathy, 1982: 42). Along with these trends, on the one hand the increasing 'globalisation' of academic marxism has occurred (Shanin, 1982: 408) and on the other, new alternative approaches enjoying increasing recognition have appeared. These are "chiefly marxism and the various more or less related trends such as 'radical anthropology', 'emancipatory anthropology', 'materialistic anthropology' or '(neo) marxist anthropology'" (Brunt, 1975:78).

The present study is an investigation of some tribal communities of Orissa viewed as agrarian communities, within the marxist perspective. The primary focus is on the dynamics of change from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture, the consequent processes of peasantisation and depeasantisation, and the nature of change in the structure of social relations.

In the next section (1.2), we trace the major trends in social anthropology at the international level, particularly, keeping in mind their significance for tribal studies. These trends generally correspond with the changing historical conditions. In section 1.3, the influence of the above trends is demonstrated on tribal studies in India and gaps in tribal research are identified. Following this analysis, the theoretical approach adopted in the present study is outlined in section 1.4. It is followed by objectives and scope of the study and concepts used in our work (1.5). Finally, plan of the thesis is briefly stated in section 1.6.

## 1.2 TRENDS IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES

The origin of anthropology as a discipline is linked with colonialism. The colonial rulers gathered information about their subjects on all vital aspects for the expansion and consolidation of the colonies. As Evans-Pritchard states, "If it is the policy of a colonial government to administer a people through their chiefs, it is useful to know, who are the chiefs and what are their functions and authority and privileges and obligations. Also if it is intended to administer a people according to their own laws and customs one has first to discover what those are" (1951: 109-110). Likewise, Memmi (1967), Gough (1968), Boissevain (1974), Cohn (1980) and several other anthropologists have agreed on the important role played by anthropological studies for the smooth administration and expansion of colonial empires. In this context, we will briefly present the research traditions of the discipline in terms of colonial and post-colonial conditions.

### (a) Colonial Tradition:

As stated earlier, during this period, an important concern was to help the colonial rulers for the general administration and expansion of colonies. At first, the anthropologists were not trained in the discipline. The model of research in the beginning was "missionary in the row

boat" (Cohn: 1980: 198). Here "the missionary, the trader, the labour recruiter or the government official arrives with the bible, the mumu, tobacco, steel axes or other items of western domination on an island whose society and culture are rocking along in the never never land of structural functionalism, and with the onslaught of the new, the social structure, values and life ways of the 'happy' natives crumble" (Cohn, 1980: 199). The subjects were treated as mere objects of study (Levi-Strauss, 1966: 126). Gradually more and more students were trained as anthropologists. Alongwith the collection of data all over a colony, established anthropologists were made administrators. Evans-Pritchard, Nadel and Audrey Richards were made administrators in Africa by the colonial rulers. Anthropologists were even actively involved in spying, for which Boas criticised them for their alleged role as spies during the First World War (1919: 797).

So, the emphasis of the anthropological research in colonial tradition was on equilibrium and stasis of the system. The dominating paradigm of the period was functionalism which considered the social structure as the ordered arrangement of parts, where the parts or social groups and institutions perform various roles, necessary for maintenance of the system. It considered that functional inconsistency emerged because of the conflict in the sub-structures of the system, which ultimately could be resolved by some change within the

system itself. The importance was on synchronic functional analysis of the field data without any emphasis on history and change of the societies.

(b) Post-colonial Tradition:

There are two distinct traditions during the post-colonial phase -

- (i) Neo-colonial, and
- (ii) Marxist.

(1) Neo-colonial:

After the second World War, the United States replaced the earlier colonising countries. The Americans felt the need to know "the others" in the Pacific, in India, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe" (Cohn, 1980: 204). Thus in the United States, the administration realized the importance of anthropology as a relevant discipline and anthropologists also responded to offer their services for that purpose (Saberwal: 1970). The anthropologists, among all other Social Scientists, were found to be most suitable for this purpose because of their involvement with the subjects continuously for a long period during the field work. Accordingly, the academic activities of the discipline also became wider as the United States took interest to know about the countries in which it had continuing strategic, economic

and political interests. At the same time several private funding agencies came forward to finance and encourage the research to safeguard interests of the United States. So the primary aim of most of the research projects financed by such "trustees" of the United States was either to maintain the existing order or to collect the vital information for the administration.

As we have mentioned earlier the research areas of the discipline were expanded to meet the new demands. One of the newly discovered areas of research of this period was 'acculturation'. The seed of disruption of the tribal economy and political system through the rampaging market forces, sown during the colonial period created disturbances in tribal societies. In the United States, to understand and also to bring the 'Red Indians' into the mainstream, several studies were made by the anthropologists. The encounter like those between the 'Red Indians' and the 'White settlers' gave rise to several rebellious movements. This, ultimately provided enormous information to construct models in anthropology. The pioneer of one of the schools of acculturation was Robert Redfield, who developed the concept of 'Folk-Urban Continuum' after a series of studies done in Mexico (cf. Redfield: 1953). He formulated the idea as a polar-ideal type of construction, which implied that no known society corresponds to the description of both the extreme ends, but all fall somewhere

between the two poles. He used the 'outlook on life' as the dominant criterion to characterize the 'folk' and 'urban' societies. The folk society represents the past and the urban society represents the modernised present and the transformation from the former to the latter can be studied as a sequence of historical stages. This concept of Redfield continued to guide the anthropological research for a considerable period and continues to do so even now in several Third World countries. In India, Tribe-Caste, Tribe-Peasant, Rural-Urban continuum frameworks have generated and are still generating a considerable number of studies. (See Bailey (1960), Patnaik (1963), Sinha (1965), Majumdar (1972), Bhandari (1978), Goswami (1978)).

The 'folk-urban continuum' generated a debate among the anthropologists in America, when new information from various field studies started pouring into the discipline. 'Peasant society' is thus added as an intermediate type of society within the above continuum. Wolf (1966) argued that there was at least one typical cultural form available, which had absorbed some of the characteristics of both the 'folk' and the 'urban'. The presence of 'peasants' in all parts of the world considerably widened the field of social anthropologists. Peasants stay in villages in the plains and hence, villages are taken as the unit of study. The recognition of peasantry as a social type led to several studies and contributed

knowledge about economy, ecology and cultural change. On the one hand, the changing situation of tribal communities is analysed as peasant societies, for example, in the work of Fallers (1961: 103-10), Saul and Woods (1971: 103-114) in Africa; Bailey (1960), Sinha (1965) in India; and on the other, the condition of peasants in the plantation economy of the Carribeans in the work of Mintz (1974), Wolf (1955), Feder (1979). Then the revolutionary potential of the peasants, found in the writings of Mao, and especially the role of the Vietnamese peasants and several other peasant struggles throughout the world drew social scientists from various disciplines towards peasant studies. But the shift from tribal to peasant studies is interpreted in various ways. Silverman states that, "Anthropology did not invent the study of peasants, but in a sense it discovered the subject for itself, for peasant studies in Aglophone cultural and social anthropology developed independently of earlier scholarly interest in peasants" (1983: 8). On the other hand, Shanin argued that the shift to peasant studies was because of the non-availability of "small tribes and closed folk communities" (1971: 12). Hebel (1966) and Sachidananda (1978) justified their new research interest on peasants and argued that as tribals are found everywhere because of urbanization, anthropologists have also followed them everywhere. So, either because of the shortage of 'tribal' communities or their



presence everywhere, anthropologists and other social scientists are studying peasant societies. To report and publish the works on peasantry the Journal of Peasant Studies and Peasant Studies were started in England and America respectively.

Alongwith the 'peasant studies', 'anthropology/sociology of development' also emerged during this period again with the notion of rural change devoid of any structural, large-scale transformation. 'Community Development', one of the package programs of the United States, was propagated by the American anthropologists in the Third World countries (Srinivas and Panini, 1973: 199).

So, this tradition did discover new research areas, specific to the needs of the neo-colonialism. The emphasis is mainly on the collection of vital information and imposition of new models for the transformation of 'the others'.

#### (ii) Marxist:

The marxist tradition in social anthropology is of recent origin. The counter-culture, anti-war movement, women's movement and the neo-colonial exploitation in the Third World countries and also a number of outbursts of various ethnic groups all over the world influenced many anthropologists and other social scientists to question the



existing tradition of research. In this context, "the rallying symbol of new criticism and of the theoretical alternatives offered to replace the old models was Marx" (Ortner, 1984: 138).

Two schools of thought have emerged in this tradition, one, 'structural marxism' developed in France and England, second, 'political economy' emerged in the United States and England respectively.

Drawing their inspiration from Marx and then from Althusser and Balibar (1970), the French Marxists take the notion of the determination in the last instance of the forms and evolution of societies by the conditions and production and reproduction of their material life as its central hypothesis. The persistence of the pre-and non-capitalist relations of production becomes the main question in their studies. Sahlins (1958) analysed the stratification system of the Polynesian society on the basis of kinship. Meillassoux (1972) gives importance to the relationship of man with land to understand different forms of pre-capitalist societies. Terray (1972) used the Marxist concept of historical materialism to understand the dynamics of change of primitive societies. Godelier (1977) analyses the transformation of the primitive societies taking kinship both as an infra- and super structure.

Here the importance lies in the structure of social relations. Ecology, culture and kinship are also taken into consideration to understand the social reproduction, legitimization of the existing order, exploitation and inequality in the system. The works of all the above scholars of this tradition, "certainly succeeded in shaking up most of the received wisdom" (Ortner, 1984: 139).

The other school of neo-marxist tradition is that of 'political economy', constructed along the lines of sociology of underdevelopment (Frank: 1967). Here the focus is on large scale regional political/economic systems instead of the small communities, studied by anthropologists. The historical analysis of the societies especially in relation to the capitalist penetration is the central focus of this school. 'Global anthropology', developed by Ekholm (1980) along the lines of Wallersteinian and Frankian model, asserts the existence of three areas - a highly developed center, a less developed periphery and a totally underdeveloped outer areas. The outer area represents the primitive societies. It considered all the three - centre, periphery and the primitive societies as "contemporary and interdependent so that their individual evaluations are in the last instance functions of the larger system" (Ekholm, 1980: 159).

In this sketch of the developments in the discipline of anthropology in the international scene, it is seen that

it is increasingly becoming theory-oriented. The role of history in the anthropological research has been a continuous effort since the 1960s. Cohn suggests that "history can become more historical in becoming more anthropological, and anthropology can become more anthropological in becoming more historical" (1980: 216). Finally, another change in the body of anthropological literature that one can find is the appeal to recognise one's professional endeavours to be a form of labour to play an ethical and revolutionary role for the liberation of humanity (Scheffler: 1981).

### 1.3 TRIBAL STUDIES IN INDIA

Anthropology in India, like in other colonized countries, originated under the protective umbrella of colonialism. And likewise, during the colonial and post-Independence period, the anthropological studies are mainly in the colonial and neo-colonial traditions as outlined in the previous section. In this section the trends of anthropological research in India are traced with specific relevance to our topic. Pathy has criticized the anthropological research trends in India for not keeping pace with the international developments and remaining "a-historical, non-economic and micro-research" (1982: 2).

Here, we will discuss the social anthropological research in India under the following three headings:

- (a) Tribal ethnographic studies
- (b) Tribe-caste Continuum studies
- (c) Tribe-Peasant Continuum studies.

(a) Tribal Ethnographic Studies:

In the beginning, census officers, colonial administrators and missionaries collected data on the spectacular and bizarre aspects of tribal life (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1977: 37). Then the trained anthropologists, both British and Indian, started studying the tribals and wrote monographs and descriptive accounts, covering all aspects of a specific tribe.

The establishment of the 'Asiatic Society of Bengal' in 1774 gave the impetus for interaction among the anthropologists. Several handbooks on tribes and castes of various regions were produced by the administrator-anthropologists for effective colonial administration.

Then after Independence, the tribal studies flourished along the line of the Anglo-Saxon school. The transformation of tribal societies attracted the scholars towards development studies. Indian Government employed anthropologists to study the problems of the tribals and make recommendations to the Government for their welfare. Several suggestions are being made to contain the tribal problems and all of them are centered around the process of acculturation of the tribals.

The 'isolation' policy (see Elwin 1959), which suggested to keep the tribals in isolation influenced the administrators both in colonial and post-Independence period. In the post-Independence period, the declaration of some tribal areas as 'Scheduled Areas' and 'Tribal Areas' is an example of the policy of isolation. On the other hand, alternative policies of 'assimilation' and 'integration' were propounded along the lines of acculturation studies (see Ghurye, 1963; Majumdar, 1947; Sinha, 1956). But in all the studies, either for the academic development or for the requirement of the administration, the anthropological community could not give an acceptable, unanimous definition of 'tribe'. The Indian Government prepared the list of tribes on a priori basis (Pathy et al., 1976) and "two ill-conceived equations, adivasi = tribe; tribe = scheduled tribe" (Sengupta, 1984) continued to dominate the anthropological and government's policy research. So, the debate on the definition of 'tribe' was closed and for all the tribal researchers today, a tribe is a tribe which is included in the official list of Scheduled Tribes.

The attempt to bring the tribals into the mainstream, where caste system is prevalent, and the interaction between tribe and caste in the plains gave rise to the 'Tribe-Caste Continuum' studies. The changing nature of tribal societies is analysed in relation to the caste societies.

(b) Tribe-Caste Continuum Studies:

The 'folk-urban continuum' perspective of Redfield influenced the tribal studies by looking at the dynamics of socio-economic change in the mould of 'Tribe-Caste Continuum'. Sinha (1965) has discussed the assimilation of tribes into caste-peasant base of Indian civilization through the adoption of agricultural technology, linguistic and cultural norms of the mainstream Hindu Society. He used the same criteria to identify both caste and peasant. But the difference lies in the degree of "extensive territorial affiliations with multiple centres of civilization through a diverse network of relationship (1965: 62). Bailey (1960) put 'tribe' and 'caste' at opposite ends of a single scale but in terms of two contrasting models- the 'segmentary tribal' and 'organic caste society' model. He states that "the methods of establishing whether a particular group is a tribe or a caste are the same. If they have direct command over resources, and their access to the products of the economy are not derived mediately through a dependent status on others, then they are to be counted as a tribe, provided they fulfil a further condition: that they are a relatively large proportion of the total population in the area. If they fulfil the first condition but are a small part of the population, then they are caste" (1960: 265). Majumdar (1972) described the change of tribe to caste on the basis of

'sanskritization' whereby a tribe abandons its unclean activities, deities of tribal nature, major elements of tribal social customs and language. Apart from the above scholars, Goswami (1971), also discussed the change of 'tribe to caste' through 'peasant'. He studied the movement of shifting cultivator hilly tribals (Pahuria) to the foothills (tarua) and then to the riverine areas (thalua). Thus they changed from tribe to caste and, therefore, changed the agricultural practices to those of caste societies.

Here, caste status is considered as the important factor, without considering differentiation among the tribals. The exogenous factor (caste), a legacy of the colonial tribal studies perspective, remained dominant. Thus Goswami did not take the internal dynamics of the society into consideration while explaining change in agricultural practices.

In all the studies of this tradition, caste and peasant are treated as synonymous. When a tribe becomes caste, its members become peasants also. As peasant studies gained prominence in the international scene, some scholars in India also changed their preference to peasant studies from caste studies.

#### (c) Tribe-Peasant Continuum Studies:

Like the earlier studies, here also the Indian anthropologists looked up to the readymade definition of peasant



given by Western scholars to study the change of 'tribe to peasant'. Shanin identified four characteristics of peasant societies - one, 'the peasant family farm as the basic unit of multi-dimensional social organization', second, "land husbandary as the main means of livelihood directly providing the major part of the consumption needs", third, "specific traditional culture related to the way of life of small communities" and fourth "the under dog position- the domination of peasantry by outsiders" (1971: 14-15). Mandal (1975) and Vincent (1980) adopted Shanin's definition uncritically to analyse the change of tribe to peasant. Redfieldian concept of 'Little tradition and Great tradition' also influenced the peasant studies in India. Alongwith these trends, the recognition of historical factors, responsible for the disintegration of tribal societies, gave a different dimension to the tribal studies. The peasant studies in anthropology can be divided into two groups:

(i) Ethnographic-cultural

(ii) Historical

(i) Ethnographic Cultural:

Here a continuum of 'Tribe' to 'Emergent peasant' or 'Proto-peasant' to 'Peasant' is developed on the basis of 'Little and Great Tradition'. Bhandari (1978) coined the term 'Emergent Peasant' for a tribe which practices settled



cultivation without being involved in the 'Great tradition' of the wider society. He justified the term as the Hinduized and Christianized settled agriculturist tribals maintain their racial boundary and do not participate fully in the 'great tradition'. Joswami (1978) called the 'emergent peasant' of Bhadani as 'proto-peasant' for the same reasons. The 'great tradition' of the caste culture was taken as the reference point to analyse the change in the tribal societies. The internal dynamics, patterns of land distribution and land relations were neglected in understanding change in tribal societies. Here the cultural factors are considered central to the definition of peasant society and the evolving conditions of production tend to take the back seat.

#### (ii) Historical:

It analyses changes in tribal societies, starting with the disruptive policies of the colonial regime. Singh (1977) described the policies of the colonial government towards the tribals as the major thrust for change from 'tribe to peasant'. "The colonial system followed the policy of reclaiming the tribes to civilization through the adoption of plough culture and integration into market" (Singh, 1982: 1322). The concept of private property was introduced, commercial exploitation of forest pushed the tribals off their land in reserve forests. As a result of this, peasantized tribals

had emerged in Assam, Rajasthan and also in central India. Macdougall (1977) reported from his field studies in central India about the "incomplete form" of peasantisation of tribals in the colonial period. Upadhya (1980), on the basis of his data from Maharashtra reported that, the shifting cultivator tribals became peasants during the colonial rule. But along with the process of peasantisation, depeasantisation also continued, which gave rise to a category of labourers among the tribals. The absence of credit facilities forced the peasantised tribals to depend on the landlord-cum-money-lenders and the policy of legalised transfer of land resulted in landlessness of the tribals.

Even after the colonial rule, the same policy towards tribals has been followed by the Indian Government. Major industries and mines are found near forest areas. Tribals are evicted from their native places with little compensation, settled in the plains and given low paid manual jobs in factories and mines. These led the Government and anthropologists to study the development aspects of the tribals. But most of the studies, either the impact of industrialization (see Mahapatra, 1968) or the resettlement colony established by the Government to stop shifting cultivation (see Brian, 1976; Reddy, 1979; Rao, 1983), focus only on the precarious situation of the tribals without linking it with the colonial and neo-colonial system of appropriation.

The trend of research discussed in this chapter, from tribe to caste and tribe to peasant, settled in the depeasantisation studies, which is definitely a larger phenomenon found in the entire countryside of India. The scarcity of cultivable settled land in the plains and the poor economic condition of the tribals create the condition of land transfer in the plains. Field studies from all over India (see Fuchs, 1972; Singh, 1972; Patel, 1974; Breman, 1979) report land alienation of tribals. Now-a-days "it is mainly by economic exploitation that the tribals are forced to part with their land and to hand it over to the agricultural Hindu and Muslim castes" (Fuch, 1972: 368). And because of their emotional attachment with land and less mobility, they prefer to live as field labourers in rural areas. So "in India landless labourers were/are drawn from tribal areas and kept in the lower rank of the caste system" (Patnaik, 1983: 6).

The settled agriculturist tribals constitute 57.56 per cent of the total tribes in India. All of them stay in the plains with other caste people, except in the North-Eastern region. Then the tribal labourers constitute 33.05 per cent of total tribal population (Singh, 1982: x ). The 'traditional' studies of tribals in the plains are carried out just as in the case of 'peasant-caste', as they practice settled agriculture where the land is owned privately. But the studies of shifting cultivator tribals, who constitute 8.7

per cent of the tribal population, are mainly done along the lines of ethnographic cultural tradition. The internal factor, like the differentiation among the shifting cultivators is seldom taken into consideration. Above all, in general, tribal society in India has not been analysed as agrarian communities as pointed out by Sinha (1978) and Karna (1982).

While the in-migration of the non-tribals into tribal areas continued, the out-migration of tribals has virtually stopped. The continuous influx of non-tribals into tribal areas, and consequently the land-alienation by the non-tribals, gave rise to some legislative measures to check land-alienation. But, a class of tribal money-lenders emerged within the tribal areas and thus land transfer is taking place among tribals. Realization of the fact that tribals also exploit their fellow people and that their socio-economic set up is non-egalitarian, encouraged some researchers to study the stratification system in tribal societies. Bose (1981) identified four distinct categories of settled agriculturist tribals in Gujarat - rich peasant, middle peasant, poor peasant and agricultural labourers. Misra (1979) also reports differentiation among the tribes of Khasi hills in North-East.

But it was since the beginning of 1970s, Pathy's study on Khandha society of Orissa (1976), Burmon's study in North-East (1977), show the process of the emergence of

private property in land among the shifting cultivators. Then Chattopadhyaya (1974) and Mishra (1977) also discussed the conversion of community land into private holdings in Khasi society. In all these studies, it is shown that the headman, priests and other 'noblemen' taking advantage of their high status in society, were first ones to prepare settled land.

As the settled land required investment, constant attention in various agricultural practices on time and for better yield than shifting cultivation land, it is owned privately. It is inherited, mortgaged and sold. These studies initiated a different trend than the operating ones to understand the transition of 'tribal' societies from communal ownership to private-property oriented societies. Here, the combination of both the internal factor of differentiation and then the external factors like colonialism and inroads of caste people to tribal areas helps us to understand the dynamics of change of the society. Since, anthropology is concerned with the human condition from its origin until today, and the persistence of less differentiated shifting cultivator tribal societies and other relatively developed tribal societies at various stages will help us understand the process and factors responsible for the transformation of societies.

So, the present situation in the world demands the inclusion of tribe-peasant studies within a broader field of historical analysis, which Roseberry (1983) rightly coined as 'Proleterianization studies'. The process of transition of tribes into peasants and of peasants into depeasantised working class is generally seen as a unilinear one ( see Showmick, 1981). But "the projected depeasantisation process has not occurred in the manner that might be expected from a mechanical, unilinear model which sees 'proto-peasants' becoming 'peasants' and then 'post-peasants' (Roseberry, 1983: 70-71). The presence of peasants both in the periphery and the highly industrialized centres questioned the unilinear model, and simultaneously, the dynamics of unevenly developing capitalism.

#### 1.4 THEORETICAL APPROACH

As discussed earlier about the reigning theoretical frameworks in anthropology, the dominant one in India is ethnographic- cultural, so that social anthropology in India has not kept pace with international developments. Indian anthropologists have not even entered into theoretical discussions on the basis of their ethnographic materials, as found among the anthropologists of the African continent. Of course, Marxism, which started a different trend, "has made little inroads into the colonially entrenched discipline

of anthropology" (Pithy, 1983: 2). Such an effort has started recently to understand the transformation of tribal societies.

Our preference here is for the Marxian framework. According to marxist concept of the primitive society, labour provides the demarcation line between man and animal and is the first essential condition of human life. Man confronts the nature and consequently regulates and control (Marx, 1971: I : 173-74) the relationship between himself and nature. Man enters into relation with other man in the process of production and the very relations signify a kind of production system. According to Engels, production "was essentially collective and likewise consumption took place by the direct distribution of the products within larger or smaller communistic communities. This production in common was carried on within the narrowest limits, but committantly the producers were the masters of their process of production and products" (1972: 170-171). Primitive collectivism and primitive communal relations are destroyed only when progress in the productive forces brings about the social division of labourer with property inequalities, exploitation of man by man and in the long run antagonistic classes in the process of production. Godelier states that when "private property acquires more and more significance and where individual acquires more and more autonomy, are the starting point for forms of exploitation



of man by man, forms which as they develop destroy the former community relations and are the origin for a new development of "secondary" formation characterised by the existence of antagonistic classes and state" (1977: 100). In this process of change, Marx emphasized the internal forces than the external ones. He states, "quite apart from harmful influences coming from without, the community contains destructive elements within itself" (Marx and Engels, 1979: 296). In this line of discussion and keeping our objective in mind, we will start with shifting cultivation, which Godelier thinks, "creates greater structural differentiation than cattleherding or other production techniques (gathering, hunting, fishing etc.)" (1977: 88). When population increases in a shifting cultivator society, they split and acquire a new virgin forest area for shifting cultivation. But, when it becomes impossible due to non-availability of forest areas, they produce more from the same area and then proceed to more intensive cultivation (Godelier, 1972: 312). When sustenance of the people becomes difficult because of the shorter fallow period of the shifting cultivation area, and intensive cultivation of the same plot year after year, facilitate and demand intensive care. The co-operation of the fellow-people is reduced, labour power of the family no more becomes important, surplus takes over for the expansion of the property. Here, people in special positions, avail the



opportunity to capture the suitable land for settled land, a scarce commodity in the hilly areas. So, the germs of differentiation of the earlier mode of production gives rise to more differentiation profoundly in later development.

Now, with this framework, an attempt is made to verify this with the empirical data.

### 1.5 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF STUDY

The problem under investigation is the process of change in primitive tribal societies. This is not simply a historical issue. But the fact that certain tribal societies in third world countries are yet to demonstrate a qualitative shift in their living makes it contextually significant, and may also contribute to our understanding of a theoretical problem of social dynamics.

The concern here is on the transition of primitive economies. It is to explore the process of transition from an ideal communal ownership of means of production to an ideal private ownership of means of production, from self-sufficiency to dependence and subjugation, from the absence of internal differentiation to class formation, surplus appropriation and antagonistic contradiction and from relative stagnancy to relative dynamics. And in order to understand this process of change, we have taken the processes of

'peasantisation' and 'depeasantisation' as the key concepts for our analysis.

Here peasantisation refers to the process by which a tribal switches from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture. On the other hand, depeasantisation is taken to be the process by which a peasant (a tribal practising settled agriculture) is alienated from his settled land. In the process of peasantisation, communal property is transformed into individual property where as depeasantisation implies loss of individual property, in this case land.

Our study is confined to Sambalpur district of Orissa. Bamra was a feudatory state in the colonial period, which was split into two subdivisions, Deogarh and Kuchinda after Independence and merged into Sambalpur district. We studied four villages for this work. First, a Bhuiyan tribal village situated in the hills, where they engage predominantly in shifting cultivation with food gathering and hunting of wild animals. The second, again a Bhuiyan tribal village in the hills, where they practise shifting cultivation and settled agriculture with the allied activities like the first one. The differences between these two villages are: the tribals of the first village clear the jungle for shifting cultivation on the basis of labour power of the family, whereas in the second one the distribution is equal irrespective of the

labour power of the families; the first village is far off from the plains with little communication facility whereas the second one is nearer with better communication facility; the private ownership of settled land is found in the second village whereas in the first village this is absent; the adherence to food gathering and hunting is less in the second village than the first one and above all the first village maintains more of tribal culture in terms of youth dormitory, scattered settlement pattern, usage of tribal dialect etc., than the second village.

The third village is a multi-caste and multi-tribal one situated at the foot hills. The villagers practise only settled cultivation.

The fourth village, a multi-tribal one is also situated in the plains and the villagers practise only settled cultivation. This village was established by the Government to stop the shifting cultivation and tribals were drawn from the same area, where the first two villages are situated. It is considered as a hamlet of the third village, because of its nearness and dependence in every respect.

Hence, this study seeks an explanation of transformation of tribal societies, taking into consideration the historical factors of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods to findout the process of peasantisation and depeasantisation.

The major objectives of the study are:

- (1) to identify the pattern of differentiation among shifting cultivators;
- (2) to identify the reasons, responsible for the emergence of privately owned settled agricultural land among the shifting cultivator tribals.
- (3) to compare the nature of social relationships among the shifting cultivator and 'shifting plus settled agriculturist tribals.
- (4) to examine the position of settled agriculturist tribals, when they live among the non-tribals.
- (5) to examine the process of change in social relationships in all the villages in terms of coremonial friendship to patron-client relationship and then to class relationship.

#### 1.6 PLAN OF THE THESIS

The present study has been divided into eight chapters.

Chapter II describes the field and the method of data collection.

In chapter III, a historical sketch of the Bamra state and Sambalpur kingdom is presented.

Chapter IV describes the key elements of shifting cultivation among the Bhuiyan tribals and also the calender

of other economic activities.

In chapter V, differentiation among the shifting cultivators and the consequent process of peasantisation is discussed.

In chapter VI the process of depeasantisation among the Bhuiyan tribals is discussed.

In chapter VII, change of egalitarian ceremonial friendship to patron-client relationship is analysed and the possibility of change to class relationships explored.

Major conclusions of the study are presented in the final chapter. Policy implications following from the study and some potential areas of further research are briefly stated.

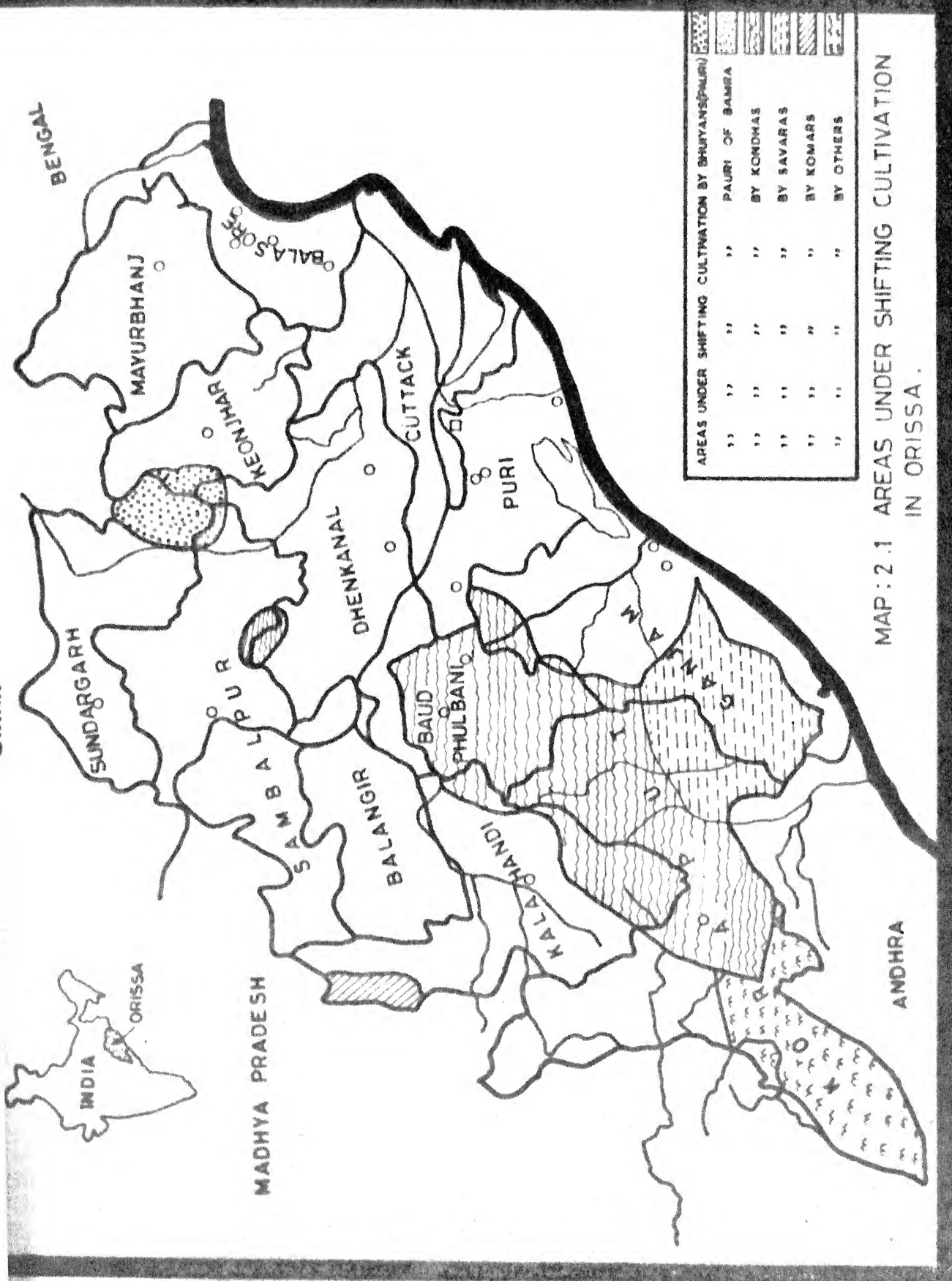
## CHAPTER II

### DESCRIPTION OF THE FIELD AND METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Our field lies in Sambalpur, one of the western-most districts of the state Orissa (see map 2.1). In order of size and population it holds the second and fourth places respectively among all districts of Orissa. It has an area of 17,520.3 sq. kms and a population of 1,508,636 in the year 1961 (Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971: 3). Sambalpur district is famous for the Hirakud dam, situated at a distance of 15 kms. away from the district headquarters. It supplies water for irrigation to the land of the district and also to the neighbouring district of Bolangir and also electricity to the public and industries of the region. Several industries like cement, fertilizer, sugar, paper, aluminium are found in the district. Rourkela steel plant and the iron ore and coal mines are located in the neighbouring district of Sundargarh which employ the people of the region.

Fourtyfour types of scheduled tribes inhabit in the district. The total population of the tribes of the district is 426564 (28.27%) (Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971: 139-140). The Bhuiyans constitute 20.17 per cent of the total tribals of Sambalpur district.



The sub-division of Deogarh, where we conducted our field work has an area of 2703.9 square kms. with a population of 120,213 in the year 1961. It has a total area of 678.35 sq. kms. of forest areas (25 per cent of the total area). shifting cultivation is practised among the Bhuiyans and Khond tribals in the forest areas of the sub-division.

In this chapter, the regional background of the field is described in section 2.2. Then the selection of the villages is described in section 2.3. Sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 describes about all the four villages. In section 2.8, the methodology is described.

## 2.2 REGIONAL BACKGROUND

All the villages selected are located in that part of the ex-Bamra feudatory state which is now in Deogarh sub-division of Sambalpur district in Orissa. They are part of a stretch of land called Pauri<sup>1</sup>, which is inhabited primarily by the Bhuiyan tribe.

### (a) The Pauri:

The Pauri comprises the hilly areas of Deogarh sub-division of Sambalpur district, Pallahara sub-division of Dhenkanal district, Bonai sub-division of Sundargarh district

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1. Pauri means hillock or a group of hills.



and Anandpur sub-division of Keonjhar district of Orissa (see map 2.1). Though these four adjacent tracts were under the respective feudal chiefs during the pre-colonial and colonial periods, they were interacting freely among themselves through marriages, tribal festivals, tribal panchayats and several weekly markets of the area. Our fieldwork was conducted in the Pauri of Bamra only.

(b) The Pauri of Bamra:

(i) Physical Features:

The Pauri of Bamra is now under the Barkote police station of Deogarh sub-division of Sambalpur district (see map 2.2). The river Brahmani flows on the eastern side of the Pauri at the height of 678 meters from the sea level. Several forest streams flow near the villages and the Bhuiyans depend on such streams for water. There is only one big stream which passes near the villages of Kadalidihi, Mahuldiha, Valadu and Rugudakudar and ultimately it takes the shape of a minor river at Rugudakudar. During summer all the streams become dry and the Bhuiyans depend on wells or some deeper points of the streams.

Forest covers the hill villages whereas the plains villages of Pauri are like any other plains villages. The Bamra Pauri, like other Pauris is divided into reserved and

khasra forests. In khasara forest the tribals practise shifting cultivation and bring firewood and other essential materials and the reserved forest is used by the Government for commercial use. This distinction was created by the colonial Government.

The climate is characterized by hot dry summer and well distributed rains in the south-west monsoon season. The annual rainfall is 1,610.1 mm.

The people of the Pauri and also the entire Deogarh sub-division are stricken with malaria frequently. The state government gives Rs.30 per annum as malaria allowance to its employees in Deogarh. The climate and living conditions of the Pauri are considered unhealthy. The forest of Pauri is full of wild animals like bear, spotted deer, barking deer, Sambhar, wild boar, hyena and nilgai (*bosephalus tragocamelus*). Leopards and elephants come occasionally to the Pauri of Bamra. Tigers are not found in the Pauri but comes once or twice a year from the nearby forest areas of Bonai and Pallahara. Fatalities are rare among the Bhuiyans as they are well-aware of the behaviour of the animals and also efficient in getting away from the attack of these animals. But the plains people, living in the vicinity of the Pauri are often attacked by the bear. Bhuiyans go to the forest with bows and arrows and/or axes. Women, generally go in groups or with

their menfolk. In the night, they move with the burning branches, which help them save from bears and also to locate the forest pathways.

Among the reptiles, the cobra, the banded krait, Russell's viper, python and various types of harmless grass snakes are found.

Besides these, several categories of birds are found. The Bhuiyans hunt the animals like wild boar, sambhar, nilgai, deer and different kinds of birds, but on the other hand, these animals and birds destroy the majority of their standing crops.

The problem of communication in the hilly areas of the Pauri, unhealthy living conditions and lack of suitable land for settled cultivation keep the Bhuiyans isolated to a great extent from the nearby plains non-tribals of Orissa.

#### (ii) History:

The Pauri of Bamra comprises 22 villages, 10 of which are in the hills and the rest at the foothills. The tribals who are living in the hills mainly practise shifting cultivation in the khasra forest and the tribals of the plains practise settled agriculture or depend on it in some way or other. Whereas in the hills, the villages are inhabited fully by the Bhuiyans, in the plains, the villages are multi-

caste and multi-tribal.

There are no relevant historical records existing and, therefore, a short history has been reconstructed here on the basis of the accounts given by the respondents, especially the eldest members.

The first village in the Pauri of Bamra was called Tentulikhunti and came into existence approximately in the middle of the 18th century.<sup>2</sup> On being overpopulated it was split into three villages - Balidihi, Kadalidihi and Pacheripani, leaving the site of the original village. With further pressure of population growth another four villages - Outal, Budhabhuin, Kaladu and Depatala came into existence in the Pauri. Then in the year 1891, the king of Keonjhar crushed a Bhuiyan revolt<sup>3</sup> forcing some of the Bhuiyans to flee to the Pauri of Bamra. Thus another two villages - Sarankot and Rugudakudar were settled by those migrants. These nine villages have expanded into another nine as the pressure on forest land for shifting cultivation increased for a variety of reasons.

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2. The year is calculated on the basis of the geneological chart of the villages Kadalidihi and Pacheripani.
  3. There was a Bhuiyan rebellion in 1891 in the Feudatory state of Keonjhar against the Bethi labour (bonded labour).

After Independence, three new villages - Debichuan Forest Colony, Bijadihi and Jalisuan were created by the state Government at the foothills in order to encourage the Bhuiyans to stop the practice of shifting cultivation and, instead, adopt settled agriculture. The Bhuiyans in these villages were offered incentives like land, bullocks and implements to make this transition.

(iii) Communication Links:

Except for temporary seasonal roads built annually by the jungle contractors to transport bamboo and timber out of the forest by trucks, there are no roads in the Pauri area. Bhuiyans visit other villages by walking along the forest pathways. In the plains the modes of communication are bicycles and bullock carts.

A village called Kala, located in the plains plays a key role in linking the Pauri with the outside world. A tar road passes through it and buses and other vehicles ply throughout the year. It has a post office, High School, a co-operative Society, Bank and a weekly market.

(iv) Language:

The language of the Bhuiyans is kui. But they understand oriya, the language of the plains. Since men interact more with the non-tribals in markets and labour camps of the contractors

in the forest, their knowledge of oriya is better than that of women. In the plains areas of the Pauri, the Bhuiyans use more of oriya than the Bhuiyans of the hills. The non-tribals of the neighbouring villages do not find a problem in understanding kui.

(v) Economic Activities:

The main economic activity of the hill Bhuiyans is shifting cultivation. Along with this they also go for hunting, food gathering and wage labour under the jungle contractors. They collect the forest produce like Mahua flower and exchange it with salt, either in the Kala market or in their own villages and also sell various types of fruit, root and tuber and mushroom in the plains villages. They generally do not come to the plains to work as labourers except in a few cases when they work for a year or two to repay debt of landowner-cum-moneylenders.

The Bhuiyans of the plains practise settled cultivation or work as farm labourers. They sell firewood, leafcups to the plains people throughout the year. They also go to the forest areas to work for the jungle contractors.

Though other tribals like the kisans, the kolhas, and the non-tribals go for work to the construction sites of roads and bridges, the Bhuiyans of the Pauri prefer to limit their work within the Pauri or neighbouring plains villages.

Then the iron ore mining area in Bonai and the Rourkela steel plant situated at a distance of 60 kms. and 80 kms. respectively also do not attract the Bhuiyans though other plains areas tribals and non-tribals prefer them rather than the low paid job of the area.

### 2.3 SELECTION OF THE VILLAGES

As stated in the previous chapter, our primary objective in this study is to locate the source of differentiation within the primitive agrarian societies and then understand the mechanism of further differentiation as the first stage of shifting-cultivation (in an agrarian community) is transformed through the process of peasantisation into the stage of settled agriculture. We are further interested in understanding the process of depeasantisation and evaluating its extent amongst the tribal communities which have already made the transition to settled agriculture. Corresponding to these stages, our attempt will be to identify changes in the structure of social relations. Keeping these objectives in view four villages were selected. In the first one, Biringapur<sup>4</sup> only shifting cultivation is practised. In the second village,

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The names of all the four villages are pseudonyms. We have preferred these names for our convenience. The original and pseudonyms are given below.

4. The original name of it is Kadalidih. Biringa means shifting cultivation among Bhuiyans.

Mishapur<sup>5</sup> settled agriculture as well as shifting cultivation exist and the principle of land allotment in shifting cultivation is different from that of Biringapur. The third and fourth villages, Chaasanur<sup>6</sup> and Sarkarpur<sup>7</sup> have only settled cultivation now and are multi-caste and multi-tribal ones. Thus we have started with the assumption that these four villages represent the successive transitional stages in an agrarian community. We recognize the methodological weakness of starting with the assumption of successive stages, we feel that this is the best alternative available under the given constraints.

## 2.4 BIRINGAPUR

### (a) General Description:

There are 28 households of the Bhuiyan tribe in the village and all of them practise shifting cultivation. It is situated near the border of Deogarh and Bonai sub-divisions. As the crow flies, the village is 15 kms. away from National Highway No.6. But it is 25 kms. away from village Kala which is the panchayat headquarters of the former. There is no

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5. The original name of it is Pacheripani. Misha means mixed in oriya.
  6. Sarankot is the original name of it. Chaasa means cultivation in oriya.
  7. Debichuan colony is the original name of the village. Sarkar means the government.



road connection with other villages of the area. The forest contractors have also not made a temporary road connecting Biringapur, and forest produce is carried by labourers to camps, situated at a distance of one to two kilometres from the village.

There is no school in the village. The nearest lower primary school is at the village Outal at a distance of 3 kms. Only the low ranking forest officials, police and the supervisors of the contractors come to the village. The official of National Malaria Eradication Programme comes to the village occasionally. Generally he gives chloroquine medicine to the headman of the village in the weekly market and the latter distributes the medicine among the villagers.

(b) History:

The first settlers of Biringapur are Mandals.<sup>8</sup> The present 16 households of this group have emerged from the 6 households of the first settlers, who had come from the village Tentulikhunti of the Pauri. These six households distributed the positions of Pradhan (Headman), Dehuri (Priest) and Behera (Helper of the Headman and Priest) among themselves. After the Mandals, the first migrants to the village were from

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8. The geneological chart of the village shows Mandals as the first settlers. They hold the positions of Pradhan, Dehuri and Behera of the village since its establishment as reported by the villagers.

Keonjhar during the Bhuiyan rebellion of 1891. Then the affinal relatives, both from the plains and hills came to the village. The total population of the village was 138 during the year 1982. We have divided the total population of the village into two categories - first settlers and the migrants and then the migrants into two more categories, i.e., from hills and from plains. The reasons for migration are different in the two cases-( see Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1 Order of arrival, background and relations of the people of Biringsapur.

Category	Place of origin	No. of house-holds	Past occupation	Relations with the villagers	Reason	Present total Population	Percentage of total Population
First Settlers	Pauri of Bamra	16	Shifting Cultivation	-	For Shifting Cultivation land	88	63.78%
Migrants	Hills	5	Shifting Cultivation	4 Affinal relatives	4 Relations 1 Rebellion	20	14.49%
	Plains	7	Labourer	Affinal relatives	Relations	30	21.73%
Total		28				138	100%

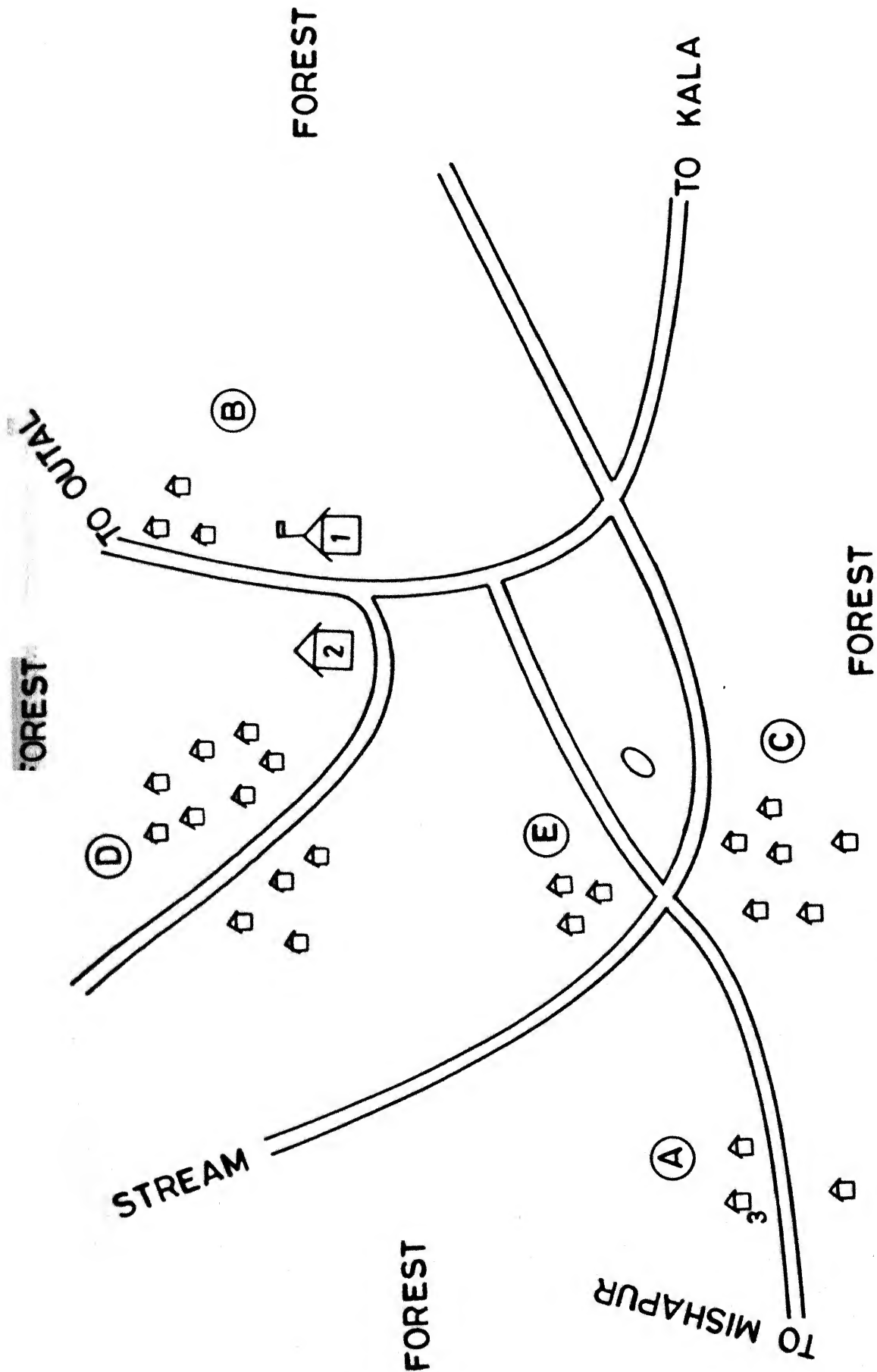
The above mentioned division of the population has significant implications for the system of stratification.

(c) Pattern of Residence:

It has a 'dispersed' residential pattern, peculiar to shifting cultivators unlike the nucleated villages where settled agriculture is practised. There are five small hamlets in the village. The Headman, the priest and a relative of the former stay in Purunadihi, the oldest hamlet. The Durbar (Youth dormitory) is situated by the side of the temple of Bisiri (village deity) in Nuan dihi (New site), one of the newer hamlets. The dancing ground is found in front of the Durbar, where unmarried boys and girls dance at night frequently and also the villagers meet to discuss various problems. One of the brothers of the Headman, two households of the descendants of the early settlers live in Nuan dihi. The Behera and two of his relatives, who have come from other shifting cultivation villages live in Dangapani, another hamlet of the village. In Mayurnacheni hamlet, twelve households, majority of them migrants, live. The rest seven households stay in Rugudidihi hamlet. See map 2.2 for the settlement pattern of the village.

(d) Life Style:

All the houses, made of mud, are without any windows and have thatched roofs. The villagers sleep on the ground either on a mat or a piece of cloth. The possession of a



- |                  |      |                     |
|------------------|------|---------------------|
| A . PURUNA DIHI  | - 2  | 1 . BISRI TEMPLE    |
| B . NUAN DIHI    | - 3  | 2 . DURBAR          |
| C . DUNGAPANI    | - 3  | 3 . HEADMAN'S HOUSE |
| D . MAYURNACHENI | - 12 | O WELL              |
| E . RUGUDI DIHI  | - 7  |                     |

MAP: 2.2 BIRINGAPUR

cot is considered a status symbol. But those who own one do not use it for sleeping. During winter they sleep around a burning log inside the house with a towel or a cotton shawl wrapped around them. In summer, they sleep either on the verandah or a wooden "stage"<sup>9</sup> prepared in front of the house.

They use the verandah as the shed for their domestic animals and where there is no verandah or a household owns many animals, they prepare separate sheds for animals. They keep chicken inside their houses. The houses are never locked.

All the unmarried boys must sleep in Durbar, and the unmarried girls usually sleep in one of the bigger houses of the village although there is no compulsion in case of girls. The guests are generally accommodated in Durbar, if the house of the concerned person cannot accommodate them. It is the duty of the girls to clean the Durbar frequently, failing which the boys punish them with boycott and not attending their marriage ceremonies.

Various types of marriages are found in Biringapur. Though the marriage by arrangement, exchange, force are prevalent, the marriage by elopement dominates. Since the

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9. The wooden stage is prepared in summer to dry Mahua flower. Since in summer it is difficult to sleep inside the houses and sleeping on the ground becomes dangerous because of snakes and other poisonous insects, they sleep on the wooden stages.

bridal price is "high" (Approximately Rs. 500) among Bhuiyans, they prefer marriage by elopement and force. Arranged marriages generally take place among the rich families and in cases when one of the parties is from the plains.

The economic activities of the villages is discussed in detail in chapter IV.

## 2.5 MISHAPUR

### (a) General Description:

Mishapur comprising of 46 households of Bhuiyan tribe practise both shifting and settled agriculture. In a direct line, it is situated at a distance of 10 kms. from the National Highway No.6. But it is 20 kms. away from village Kala. It is linked with N. H. 6 by a kuchha (fair weather) forest road and vehicles ply mainly in summer to bring the forest produce.

As it is nearer to the plains and has got better communication facility, it attracts more non-tribals of the plains than the previous village. The non-tribals come here for forest produce, vegetables, domestic animals and hunting.

There is a lower primary school in the village since 1961. There is only one teacher in the school to teach the students from class one to class three. But he hardly comes to the school and manages to get the signature of the village headman, the chairman of the school and the school Inspector

TABLE 2.2: Order of arrival, background and relations of the people of Mishapur

Category	Place of origin	No. of house-holds	Post occu-pations	Rela-tions	Reason	Present total Popula-tion	Percenta ge of total popula-tion
First Settle- rs	Pauri of Bamra	22	Shifting cultiva- tion	-	For more land of shifting cultiva- tion	118	53.64%
Migrants	Hills	20	Shifting cultiva- tion	18-Affi- nal rela- tives.	18-Rela- tives 2-Rebe- llion	79	35.9 %
	Plains	4	Labourer	Affinal rela- tives	Relatives	23	10.46%
Total		46				220	100%

The above table, again like the Table 2.1, has got the implications for the differentiation among the villagers.

(c) Pattern of Residence:

The village Mishapur is a nucleated one like the villages of the plains. But as it is a homogeneous village inhabited only by the Bhuiyan tribals, we do not find the various caste-wise streets. The houses are built in clusters without

any wider pathways. Then, since the village has got restricted forest areas for shifting cultivation and also situated in a valley, they have settled on a particular site. The settled land are located around the village.

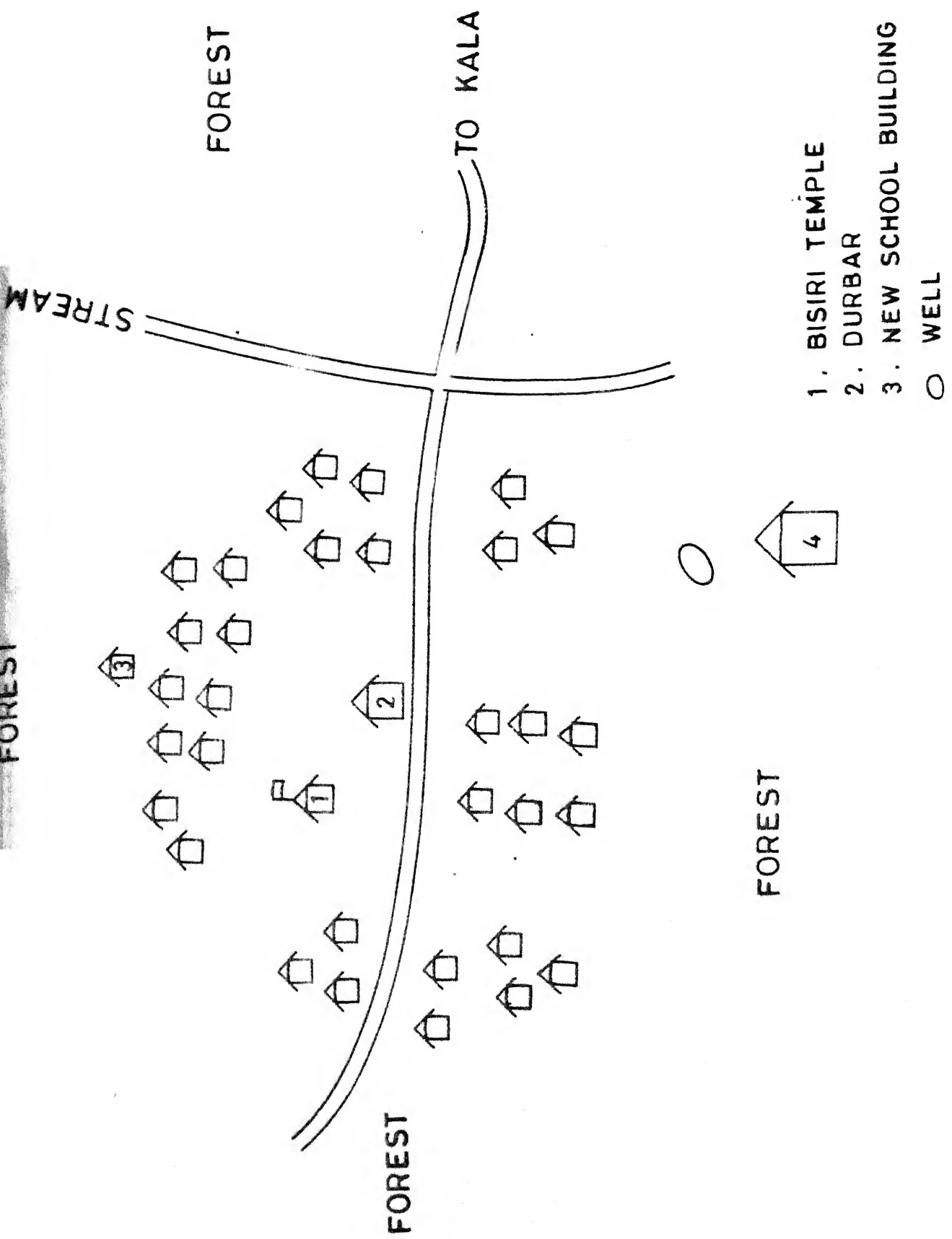
The Durbar and the Bisiri temple are situated in the middle of the village (see map 2.3). Though the new school building has already been constructed by the government on a more plains area, at a distance of one kilometre, the students do not go there and the Durbar is used as the school. The villagers have planned to shift the entire village to a new site near the school. The revenue officials have distributed the housing plots in a planned manner, which ultimately will look like a plains village.

#### (d) Life Style:

Originally, the villagers were using chana (thatching grass) for the roofs of their houses. But during our field-work, it was found that out of 46 houses, 13 houses had khapar (country tile) roofs. The non-availability of chana and also the durability of khapar have encouraged some of the well-to-do tribals to switch over to khapar roofs.

The unmarried boys hardly sleep in the Durbar in the night. But, especially after harvesting, when they become free from cultivation and the festival season starts the unmarried boys and girls dance in the night. If some guests, like





the unmarried boys and girls come to the village the youths of the village meet at the dancing ground to entertain them. The boys of the village entertain the visiting girls with a feast and then invite them for dance in the night and if the guests are boys then the responsibility falls on the girls.

Like the village Biringapur, here also the villagers sleep on the ground inside the houses around a burning log during the rainy and winter seasons. Unlike the previous village, here, some of the villagers sleep on cots in summer. The lack of space inside their houses does not allow them to sleep on cots.

The domestic animals are kept either in the verandah or sheds like the previous village. The chickens are also kept inside their houses.

Among the various types of marriage prevalent in the Bhuiyan Society, arranged marriages are more popular in Mishapur. The marriages are held more with the boys and girls of the plains villages unlike the previous village. Even in some marriages, Brahmin priests are called to perform the rites. On such occasions, 'drum party' from the plains is brought by the villagers.

## 2.6 CHAASAPUR

### (a) General Description:

Chaasapur is a multi-caste and multi-tribal village situated at the foothills of the Pauri. This village is the centre of the Pauri, because the shrine of Rambhadevi, the presiding deity of the Bhuiyans. It is situated at a distance of 7 kms. from the National Highway No.6 and also the Panchayat Kala. It is linked with the tar road with a fair weather road. There are 111 households in the village and the total population is 502 ( see the Table 2.3 for the caste and tribe composition of the village).

TABLE 2.3 : Caste and tribe composition of the village  
Chaasapur

Sl.No.	Name of the Caste/Tribe	No. of House-holds	Total Population	Percentage of the total population.
1.	Bhuiyan	39	145	28.88
2.	Kolha	12	50	9.96
3.	Kandha	2	16	3.18
4.	Pana	26	119	23.70
5.	Chasa	16	102	20.32
6.	Gauda	10	39	7.78
7.	Mahanta	6	31	6.18
Total		111	502	100

All the villagers depend on settled agriculture in some way or other. There is a upper primary school in the village since 1955. There are two small shops, with the materials of hardly Rs. 20-50 in the village. One is owned by a Bhuiyan and the other is by a Gauda in their respective hamlets. They sell tobacco, ganja, sugar, tea, betel, gudakhu (intoxicated tooth paste) and biri (local made cigarettes where tobacco is wrapped with dry leaves).

(b) History:

The village was established after the Bhuiyan rebellion of Keonjhar district in the year 1891. When the rebellion was crushed, most of the families scared of staying in their native villages migrated to the nearby states of Bamra, Pallahara and Bonai. At first two Bhuiyan families came to the present village site and practised shifting cultivation. During that time three Bhuiyan families were already staying in a nearby area and after the arrival of the migrants, all the above five families decided among themselves to settle down at the present site of the village. The migrants took the position of headman and priest and left the position of Behera to the other group. In the year 1898, one family of Pana (Harijan) was invited by the then Bhuiyan Headman to take the charge of chatia (watchman) of the village. The tribal Headman continued to rule the village upto the year 1910, when

a chasa (cultivator caste) of the plains tookover the position of Headman. The position of Pradhan was later on known as Gountia (village headman), the term prevalent in the plains. The chasa Gountia, consequently brought their fellow people, servicing caste like Gauda to the village. The availability of waste land in abundance around the village also lured the non-tribals of the plains into the village Chaasapur. After Independence, again some of the displaced persons, evacuated from the site of the Rourkela steel plant came to the village in search of settled land. They purchased land from the Panas and Bhuiyans and settled down in the village (see Table 2.4 for the order of arrival, background and reason of migration of various caste and tribes of Chaasapur).

TABLE 2.4: Order of arrival, background and reason of migration of the various caste/tribe groups

Sl. No.	Background of the migrants and years of arrival	Place of origin	Reason of migration	Caste/tribe	Percent of the present population
1.	First settlers (1891)	Keonjhar	Rebellion	Bhuiyan	29
2.	First settler (1891)	Bamra	to stay with the previous group	Bhuiyan	NIL*
3.	Migrants (1898)	Bamra	Brought by the Headman	Pana	24
4.	Migrants (1910)	Bamra	to make settled land	Chasa	20
5.	Migrants (1912)	Bamra	to serve the higher castes	Gauda	08
6.	Migrants (1920)	Bamra	for wages	Kandha	04
7.	Migrants (1950)	Pallahara	for wages	Kolha	09
8.	Migrants (1952)	Rourkela	for land	Mahanta	06

\* All of them have left for the Pauri.

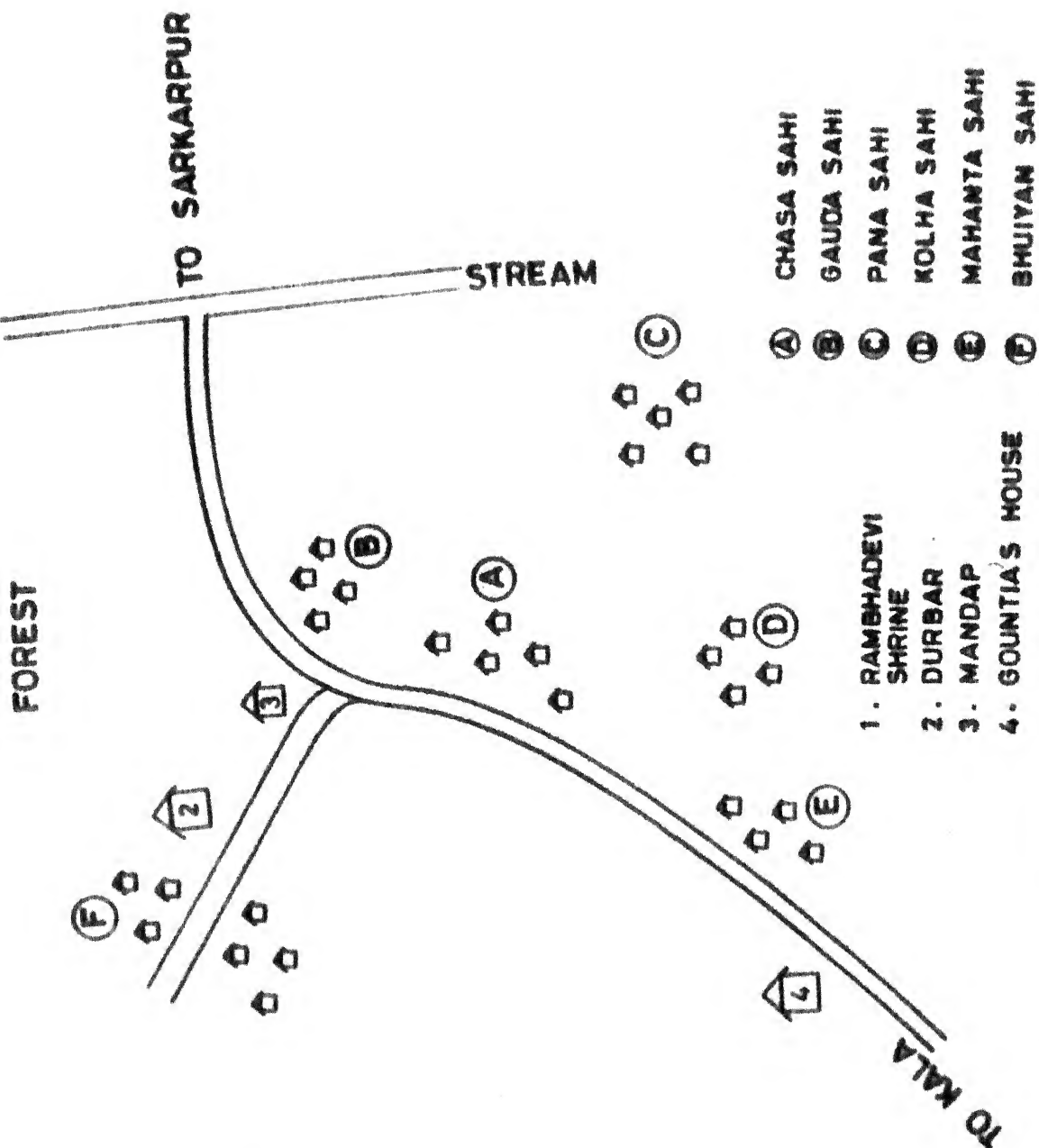
(c) Pattern of Residence:

Like all the multi-caste of the plains, Chaasapur is also a nucleated village with separate hamlets on the basis of caste hierarchy. The higher caste people like Chasa, Gauda and Mahanta and also the Bhuiyans consider the Panas and beef eater Kolhas as untouchables. There are six sahis (hamlets) in the village. Those are Chasa Sahi, Gauda Sahi, Mahanta Sahi, Pana Sahi, Kolha Sahi and Bhuiyan Sahi. These Sahis are named after the particular caste or tribe staying at those hamlets (see map 2.4).

The residential pattern of the village was like the present pattern of residence of Biringapur before the arrival of the non-tribals to the village. The Bhuiyans have been staying just at the foothills and the non-tribals have preferred to stay at more plains areas since their arrival to the village.

The houses of Kolha Sahi, Bhuiyan Sahi and Pana Sahi are found in clusters, where as in other Sahis houses are built in straight line, only on the one side of the street. Houses of the village face towards the shrine of Rambhadevi. Kitchen gardens are generally attached with the houses of Chasas and Mahantas.

The school and the Mandap (meeting place) are located in the middle of the village. Generally the non-tribals meet



MAP: 2.4 CHAASAPUR



at the Mandan to gossip and the village panchayat is also held there. Though the Durbar does not function like the villages Biringapur and Mishapur, here the Bhuiyans maintain that and meet regularly to gossip and discuss various problems concerning their society.

(d) Life Style:

The life style of the villagers gives a mixed picture. Both the processes of "Hinduization" and "Tribalization" are operating simultaneously in the village. Both the groups - Bhuiyans and the non-tribals know each others language. Bhuiyans observe some of the non-tribal festivals and ceremonial rites and the non-tribals have also adopted some of the ceremonies of the Bhuiyans (see Chapter VII). Almost all the houses have thatched roofs excluding the countrytile roofs of the houses of chasas and other well-to-do villagers. Unlike the use of chana in Biringapur and Mishapur, here the villagers use the straw of paddy for the roofs of their houses. The non-tribals generally sleep on cots inside their houses in the rainy and summer seasons. Besides the Bhuiyans with comparatively larger houses and better economic condition, everyone sleeps on the floor. In summer, all the villagers sleep on the verandahs or outside their houses. Domestic animals are kept in sheds.

Unmarried Bhuiyan boys do not sleep in the Durbar and except certain important occasions like marriage, visit of Bhuiyan boys or girls from other villages, they do not dance or sing in the village. Non-tribals especially the poor people of the village also know the songs and dance of the Bhuiyans and latter take part in singing and dancing. Bhuiyans are also well aware of the non-tribal's ways of dancing and singing.

Arranged marriage is predominant among the Bhuiyans of Chaasapur. Though the Bhuiyans marry the girls of the hilly villages, they do not prefer to fix the marriage of their daughters with the boys of the villages, where shifting cultivation is practised. The Bhuiyans of the plains villages consider the Bhuiyans of the hills as backward and the latter also admit this.

## 2.7 SARKARPUR

### (a) General Description:

Sarkarpur is situated at the foothills and comprised of 26 households. The total population of the village is 93. There are 22 households of Bhuiyan tribe, 3 households of Sabara tribe and only one household of Kamara caste in the village. It also comes under the Pauri like the previous three villages. It is situated at a distance of 9 kms. and two kms. away from the villages Kala and Chaasapur respectively.

Here, all the villagers depend mainly on settled agriculture. Only three households, who have come from Kaladu, a nearby village in the hills practise shifting cultivation in the hills and settled agriculture in their own village.

(b) History:

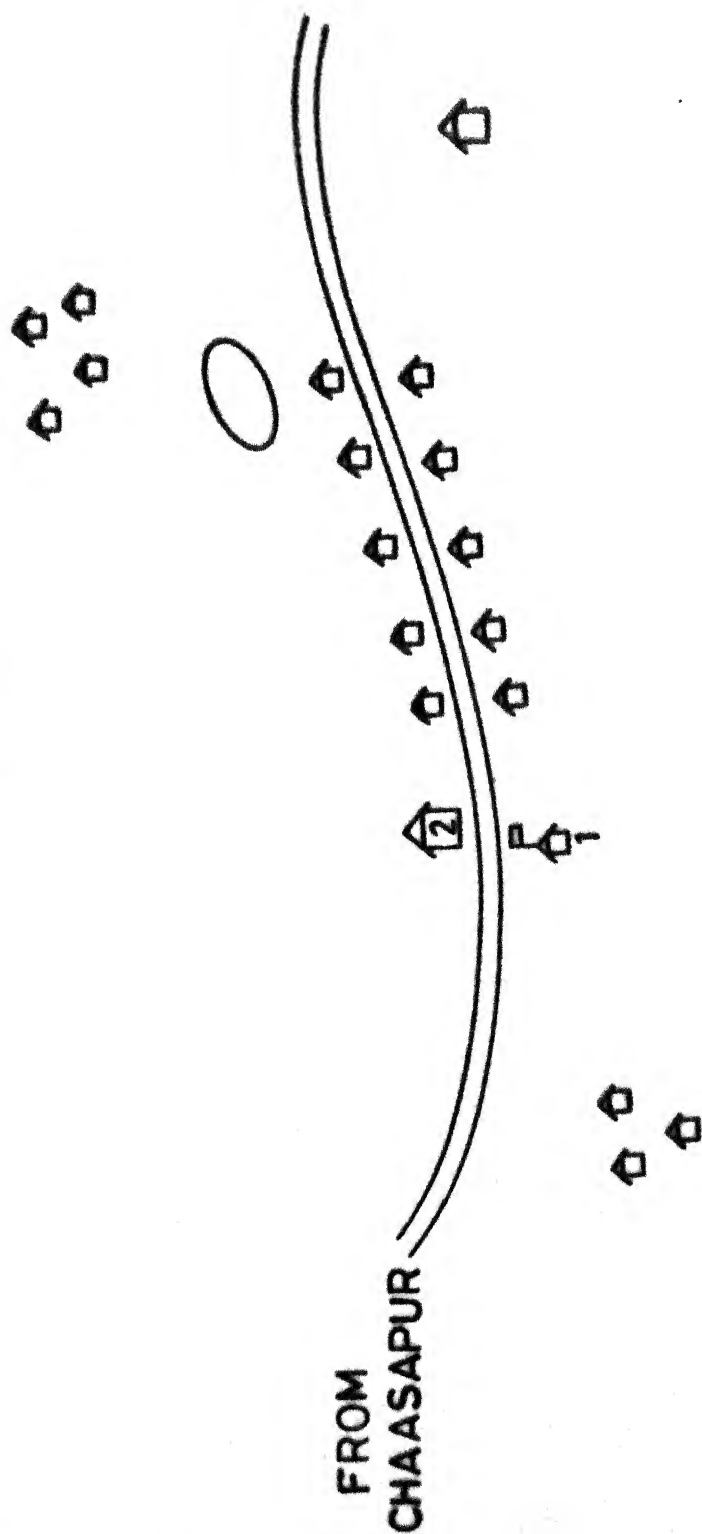
Sarkarpur came into existence in 1952. The Bhuiyans of the village Kaladu, situated at a distance of 7 kms. from Sarkarpur were settled in the latter to stop shifting cultivation. Along with the 19 Bhuiyan families of Kaladu, 2 families of Sabara tribals of the village Damita and one Bhuiyan family of Chaasapur are also settled in the village. The Indian government gave them the incentives like house, land, bullocks, metal implements, seeds etc. One pond and a well were also dug up in the village to provide them the drinking water and bathing facility. A small barrage was constructed on the nearby forest stream to irrigate their fields. But after three years of stay in their new settlement, the Bhuiyans started returning to their village, Kaladu and ultimately within the first five years 9 families returned to the stage of shifting cultivation. Even those who preferred to stay back in their new settlement were practising shifting cultivation upto 1960. When the available forest area for shifting cultivation for the Bhuiyans of Kaladu became insufficient, outsiders were denied.

(c) Settlement Pattern:

As the village is a resettlement colony, established by the government, houses were constructed in a planned manner on the both sides of the street. Settled lands are located around the village. Durbar and the Bisri temple were also located in the middle of the village.

But when the Bhuiyans of Kaladu had left the village leaving their houses and land, Sarkarpur took the shape of a dispersed village. In the meantime the barrage was also washed away in the flood of 1959. At present there are four hamlets in the village. The distance between two hamlets is a half kilometre. The tribals settled in hamlets on the basis of their kinship. The Bhuiyans of Kaladu are staying in the old site. Sabara tribals have shifted to a new site. Migrants of the village Chaasapur are staying in a new place and then one family of Kaladu, richest in the village, has preferred to stay in a different place. (See map 2.5). After 1959, when the barrage was destroyed, irrigation facility was no more available to the villagers. So, they started making settled land around their new settlement. In the meantime, houses, built by the contractors were also collapsed. So, because of all these above reasons, it took the shape of a dispersed village.

FOREST



- 1. BISIRI TEMPLE
- 2. DURBAR
- O POND

MAP: 2.5 SARKARPUR

(d) Life Style:

Unlike the Bhuiyans of Chaasapur, here the villagers have maintained their traditional life styles. But, their settlement in the plains and the practice of settled agriculture have changed their life style in comparison to the life style of the Bhuiyans of Biringapur and Mishapur. Durbar is no more functioning. Unmarried boys do not sleep in the Durbar. The location of the hamlets in different places restrict the interaction of the villagers. The Bhuiyans and Sabara of the village go for food gathering and hunting. Marriages by arrangement is predominant.

In all the villages described in this chapter, there is a relationship between the history and settlement pattern of the villages. The life style also is influenced by the settlement of the village in the plains.

## 2.8 METHODOLOGY

All the four villages were picked up by us from the census. We had paid a visit to these villages before starting our field work. We stayed two days in both the villages Biringapur and Mishapur to understand the practice of shifting cultivation and only one day in Chaasapur and Sarkarpur. After the pilot study, when we found that these villages would be suitable to understand the process of peasantisation and depeasantisation, we started our field work in September

1982. At first we stayed 4 months in Mishapur and then 3 months in Biringepur. After that 5 months field work was done in both the villages Chaasapur and Sarkarpur. We used the participant observation method to collect the data. We did not use a structured interview schedule to collect the data rather, after a month's stay in the village we framed a few questions on each area like the labour use, inputs and output from the cultivation, moneylending and landholding. To understand the change of social relations within their community and also with the outsiders, we discovered "ceremonial friendship" in the field. The exploitative nature of this type of friendship, when established with the non-tribals was also explored in the field. The conventional method of going to the field with a readymade interview schedule to collect the data, which usually found erroneous (Saberwal, 1974 : 42-63) does not give a clear picture of the field. Therefore, our stay in the field added some more questions to explore the changing social relations among the Bhuiyans. We took the full census of these villages. Alongwith the individual interviews of the head of the households, data on ceremonial friendships was collected from each and every members of the villages. Group interviews were taken to collect the history of the villages. Older members of the area, Gountias of the nearby villages, moneylenders of the villages and also the present "king" of Bamra were also taken during our field work.

The data was collected in three phases. So the mistakes were rectified and consequently the missed materials were also collected.

The first month of field work in Mishapur was very difficult. Villagers were afraid to talk to us. The money-lenders also visited the village and warned the villagers not to disclose the information on moneylending. But gradually a good rapport was easily established not only among the Bhuiyans of Mishapur but in the entire Pauri. When we went to Biringapur for our field work, the headman with some of the villagers came to the outskirts of the village to welcome us. Co-operation of the respondents with only a few cases of the problem created by the drunkards was commendable. When we were staying in Chaasapur and collecting the data of the two plains villages, the Bhuiyans of the first two villages were also visiting us, which ultimately was helping us collect additional informations. Though the plains people complain against the unhealthy conditions of living in the Pauri, we did not face any problem during our stay. Of course, we were down with malaria for some months after our field work. On the whole, field work and data collection posed no problem for us.

Secondary source materials were collected mainly from "the Orissa State Archives", Deogarh Tahsil office, Sambalpur



Collectoriate office, Kala Revenue office and the office of Barkote block. We read "The Sambalpur Patriot", a Oriya Weekly of Bamra state, available from 1889 to 1923 to collect the informations on the British rule in Bamra. Several "Reports on the Administration of Bamra" were referred in the Tahsil office of Deogarh. Previous land records of Mishapur and Chaesapur were collected from the office of the "Revenue Divisional Commissioner", Sambalpur. Alongwith these, social anthropological materials from the various books and journals were collected. The details of both the sources can be seen from the bibliography, given at the end of this thesis.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The synchronic and a historical analysis of the tribal studies in India have not been able to present the dynamics of change of the tribal societies. Realising this problem, in this chapter, a historical sketch of the British and the post-Independence periods is presented. At first in section 3.2, the history of the Sambalpur kingdom is described as the Bamra state has been attached with the former since the 14th century. Then, after presenting the history of the Bamra state in section 3.3, the land tenure system of the state is described in section 3.4 and 3.5. Then, a short description of the land tenure system among the shifting cultivator tribals during the pre-British and British period is presented. Education and communication system are described in section 3.7 and 3.8 respectively. The role of the various kings in the modernization of the Bamra state are discussed in section 3.9. Then the condition of the tribals in the British Raj and post-Independence period is described in section 3.10 and 3.11.

### 3.2 SAMBALPUR KINGDOM

#### (a) General Description:

Sambalpur is the westernmost district of the state of Orissa. It lies between  $20^{\circ} 43'N$  and  $22^{\circ} 11'N$  latitude and  $82^{\circ} 39'E$  longitude. It is bounded in the north by the district of Sundergarh and on the east by the district of Dhenkanal, on the south lies the district of Bolangir, on the west the district of Kalahandi and along with its northwestern and western boundaries lie the districts of Raigarh and Raipur of Madhya Pradesh.

The district has an area of 17,570 sq. kms. and the total population is 18,898 (Census: 1971). It holds second and fourth position in the size and population respectively among all the districts of Orissa.

The mother tongue of the people is oriya but the oriya spoken by the people of Sambalpur is different from the people of coastal Orissa. It is generally known as Sambalpuri, after the name of the district and is spoken by the people of Sundargarh, Kalahandi and Bolangir districts of Western Orissa.

Sambalpur district is divided into six sub-divisions. Those are- Sambalpur, Bargarh, Padampur, Deogarh, Kuchinda and Rairakhol. There were only two feudatory states, viz., Bamra and Rairakhol, in the Sambalpur district during the

colonial period. Bamra included the sub-divisions of Deogarh and Kuchinda whereas Rairakhol state comprised the present. Rairakhol sub-division. Our field lies in Deogarh sub-division only. The history of Bamra state is linked with Sambalpur in both the pre-British and British period and hence the description of the history of Sambalpur is essential to understand the general condition of Bamra during these periods.

(b) History:

Sambalpur kingdom was ruled by Gond and Binjhal tribals before the rule of Kshatriya castes like Gangas, Kadambas and Chauhans (Sambalpur district Gazetteers, 1971: 1). Ramei Deo, the founder ruler of the Chauhans in Patna<sup>1</sup> brought Sambalpur under his control sometime in the 14th century (Sambalpur District Gazetteer 1971: 60). In the middle of the 16th century Narasingha Dev, the then king of Patna gave the territory of Sambalpur to his brother Balaram Dev and the latter built a kingdom independent of Patna. Balaram Dev conquered the Bamra state and then reinstated Ramachandra Dev, the then king of Bamra as a feudatory of Sambalpur. Balaram Dev consolidated his power after the death of his brother, Narasingha Dev and made Sambalpur as the center of Chauhan rule instead of the former center, Patna. The Chauhans

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1. Patna is the Modern Bolangir district of Orissa.

continued to rule Sambalpur upto 1798 until the threat from the Marathas.

(i) Maratha Rule:

The Chauhans had been facing problem from Marathas since 1766, but ultimately they surrendered in 1797 and agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs.32,000 to them.

(ii) British Rule:

The East India Company occupied Cuttack and the fort of Barabati, the seat of central authority of Marathas in Orissa on 14th October, 1803. After their victory over Cuttack, they wanted to bring Sambalpur also under their control mainly to enhance the security of British possession of Cuttack. The general disatisfaction of the Zamindars and the Royal family of Sambalpur because of the oppressive rule of the Marathas helped the East India Company to capture Sambalpur from the Marathas in 1804. But when Narayan Singh, the then king of Sambalpur died without any direct heir, Sambalpur was annexed by the British in 1849 on the basis of Lord Dalhousie's "doctrine of lapse."

When the British took over the charge of Sambalpur, they raised the revenue by one fourth immediately without considering the capacity of the peasants (Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971: 73). The villages held entirely rent-free

by the village officials and religious leaders were assessed at half rates. The total revenue collection, from all sources, of the British increased from Rs.8,000, which was received as tribute before the annexation, to Rs.74,000 after the takeover of Sambalpur.

The imposition of revenue on the "rent free" land of the officials and leaders, which they were enjoying during the rule of the earlier kings created a general dissatisfaction towards the British. They took advantage of the subsumed tax-burdened peasantry and revolted against the British. Surendra Sai, one of the main aspirants to the throne was the leader of the revolt against the British. Surendra Sai had been fighting since 1827 and continued to fight, with the help of local zamindars, upto his capture in 1862.

### 3.3 HISTORY OF BAMRA STATE

Bamra state was merged with Sambalpur district on 1st January 1948 and formed two sub-divisions. Deogarh and Kuchinda.

The total area of the state was 1,988 sq. miles. The extreme length was about 75 miles and the extreme breadth was about 64 miles (Cobden-Ramsay, 1910: 119). The total population of the state was 1,78,277 according to 1941 census.

When Sambalpur came under the British rule, Bamra was also automatically brought under it in 1804. But after the annexation of Sambalpur in 1849, Brajasundar Dev, the then king of Bamra, instead of taking part in the revolt, helped the British during their conflict with the king of Angul, another feudatory state (Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971: 83). Thus the British conferred on the king the title of 'Raja Bahadur' and an agreement was made in 1867, whereby Bamra became a feudatory state of the British. The king of Bamra rendered help in the suppression of the Bhuiyan rebellion in 1891 against the oppression and exaction of the Keonjhar Maharaja (See Senapati, 1980: 135-144).

Initially during the British rule Bamra was under the central province, which was transferred to Bengal in 1905 and ultimately was merged with Orissa after its formation, combining all the Oriya speaking regions of the nearby states in 1936. The state was paying a tribute of Rs.7,500 before the Independence in 1947, though it started at Rs.1,500 in 1867. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State, 1945-46).

### 3.4 LAND TENURE SYSTEM IN BAMRA STATE

No regular settlement was made in Bamra till 1877. The rents were fixed by the appraisement of harvest (Satapathy, 1977: 17). Along with the rents, the peasants were giving

'Kar'<sup>2</sup> and 'Kartali'<sup>3</sup>, a type of tax to meet the expenditure of marriages and various other ceremonies of the Royal family. Here the peasants were obliged to sell their produce at a concessional rate (The Sambalpur Patriot, Sept. 28, 1892, and Jan. 11, 1893). The subjects were also providing 'Bethi'<sup>4</sup> labour for construction of the fort, temples etc.

Initially, the peasants were giving only paddy for the Kar and Kartali cess. In 1877, the king reduced the amount of paddy and asked the peasants to pay in moong, birhi, ghee, oil and gur (McPherson, 1927: 9). Again on the basis of the demand of the Royal family, he asked the peasants to give fine quality of rice in place of Gur. Large family of the king and expensive ceremonies of the Royal family were the reasons for extracting different varieties of food materials from the peasants.

In 1877, wet lands were measured using a unit called man.<sup>5</sup> The lands are classified into three types, namely, Aul, Doyam and Soyam, on the basis of the type of soil, and irrigation facility and the villages are also classified into three

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2. Amount fixed annually for payment by the temporary tenant to his landlord.
  3. A cess imposed by the ex-ruler of Bamra by which a tenant was compelled to sell his produce to the Royal household at a concessional rate.
  4. Bethi
  5. One man is 2/3rd of an acre.



categories like 1st, 2nd. and 3rd. on the basis of the liability to drought, irrigation facilities, destruction of crops by wild animals, means of communication and nearness of markets (Mepherston, 1927: 6). No rent was taken from the Gora<sup>6</sup> land of the state.

The next settlement was undertaken in 1888-89 and was called as Tadarakhi Bandobust. The aim of this settlement was to assess newly prepared lands of the state. The increase in the proportion of the different types of land and villages can be seen from the tables, 3.1 and 3.2.

TABLE 3.1 : The amount of various types of land in 1877 and 1888-89 settlement in acres, Bamra state.

Types of land	1877 settlement (in acres)	1888-89 settlement (in acres)
Aul	5727	6964
Doyam	5755	7354
Soyam	5542	8348
Gora	3959	5829
Total	20983	28495

6. Gora land is the upland.

TABLE 3.2: The number of various types of villages in  
1877 and 1888-89 settlements, Bamra state

Types of villages	Numbers 1877	Numbers 1888-89
Ist.	109	162
2nd.	154	182
3rd.	390	399
Total	653	743

SOURCE: Mcpherson, 1927 p. 4 and p. 6.

The Aul, Doyam, Soyam and Gora land increased from 5727 to 5755 acres, 5542 to 6964 acres, 7354 to 8348 acres and 3959 to 5829 acres respectively after the Tadarakhi settlement (35.8 percent increase of cultivated land). The villages of 1st, 2nd and 3rd categories increased from 109 to 162, 154 to 182 and 390 to 399 in 1927 settlement than the earlier settlement of 1909-10 (13.8 per cent increase). The British started the assessment of land in 1877 and continued to do that frequently to bring the newly prepared lands into books in 1888-89, 1894-95, 1909-10, 1927, 1929, 1941 and the Nayabadi settlement continued from 1941 to 1947. The Gountias and Pradhans of the state were free to extract rent from ryots and the king was not taking into consideration the

complaints against the Gountias. The Gountias and Pradhans were enjoying rent free land as a reward for the collection of rent and the general administration of the respective villages. The Bhogra land varies from 12 to 20.5% of the total cultivated land of the village, and when the land was less the balance was paid in cash by the state. The British were encouraging people to bring more and more land into cultivation. The king asked the people to clear waste land for cultivation and allowed to enjoy that rent free for five years (The Sambalpur Patriot, June 17, 1985). Since 1940, the king allowed the ryots to clear 30 ft. around their cultivated land to bring more land under cultivation. The king was imposing higher rate of rent on the small villages forcing the Gountias and Pradhans to extend the cultivated area and also encouraging them to set up new villages (McPherson, 1927: 12).

Whereas the cost of production of an acre of land was Rs.9 and 11 annas in 1927, if cultivated entirely by labourers, the rent was Rs. 3 and 2 annas. But the price of the commodities increased at least 40%, though the rent was constant for over 30 years, because of the export of rice and other produce to other areas by rails. The state was connected by rails with two stations Garposh and Bamra within its boarder on the main

line of the then Bengal-Nagpur ( now S. E. Railway ) railway line. Even the businessmen started selling rice in the market which was considered a new thing for the people of Bamra.

The members of the Royal family were holding revenue-free land throughout the state. Besides this, revenue free land were also enjoyed by the Brahmins and the deities of the state. Villages were classified on the basis of the payment of the revenue by the people of the state.

### 3.5 TYPES OF VILLAGE AND LAND TENURE IN BAMRA STATE

#### (A) Khamar Villages:

In this type of village, land was owned by the king and his close relatives and cultivated by tenants-at-will.

#### (B) Kharposh Villages:

These villages, either fully or partially, were owned by the distant relatives of the king. The cultivators were tenants-at-will.

#### (C) Babuan Maufi Villages:

Here land was held jointly by relatives of the ruler and a nominal tribute was paid to the state.

#### (D) Daan Villages leased out to Late Dambarudharpriya Devi:

This was known as Dambarudharpriya Devi canal tenure. Under this tenure, an area covering 38 villages was given to

Raj Jejemata Late Dambarudharpriya Devi to construct a canal estimated at Rs.50,000, from Kala to Bindapur. The grantee or her assignee would hold the villages rent free for 50 years and the state would take them back by paying Rs.50,000 or allow her to hold them rent free for another fifty years. But before the completion of the first 50 years, the tenure was abolished after the merger of the state with India.

(E) Brahmottar and Debottar Villages:

Brahmottar tenure was in recognition of the services rendered by Brahmins for religious duties. Debottar tenure was grants to deities.

(F) Gounti Villages:

The Gountias or Pradhans were the village headmen appointed by the king to collect rents. They held Bhogra land free as a reward for the collection of rent and general administration of a village or a number of villages. The Bhogra land varied from 12 - 20.5 per cent of the total cultivated land of a village (Cobden-Ramsay, 1910: 123), and when the land was less, the balance was paid in cash by the state (Mcpherson, 1927: 12). As the rent-rate was increased by the king, Gountias or Pradhans were forced to extend the cultivated

area and set up new villages. The village headmen were free to extract rent from ryots and the king ignored the complaints against them (Mcpherson, 1927: 4).

(G) Patwari Managed Villages:

Patwari was a village revenue officer who was collecting rent and maintaining village records. Generally these villages were backward and did not attract Gountias. So the state used to collect rents directly through Patwaris.

It was reported that during 1899 the Royal families and their relatives were holding 42% of the total land of the state as maufi grants (Young-husband, 1899: 18). The tenants of these types of villages were 'tenants-at-will' and could be evicted any time by the owner. After Independence it was reported that the king and his families were holding 7335.07 acres, covering 42 villages as revenue free land (Satpathy, 1977: 51). Since the Royal families, other officials and other landlords were holding more land, they were hiring halias and casual labourers during peak time for the cultivation of their land. The lower caste people were coming from distant areas of the state to work as the farm labourers in the farms of the Royal families to get respect in their own communities and also in the state (The Sambalpur Patriot: August 30, 1899). The king was extending the area of cultivation year by year by clearing the nearby forest areas. He was taking personal

interest in cultivation and was able to grow two crops in a year. He made tanks, ponds, wells and dams to irrigate his farms. He was experimenting with soil and various types of cultivation with various type of manure. So the king was always in need of labourers. The king advertised for 1,000 labourers for his farms and factories from his state and also from nearby states in 1915. To meet the labour demand of the state, the king banned the recruitment of labourers for the tea gardens and warned the recruiters to pay Rs.500 fine or six months imprisonment or both in 1902. On the other side, other landlords who were leaving the charge of cultivation on the farm labourers took keen interest in it after seeing the yield of the farms of the king. They spent money also for irrigation and the development of their land. The Sambalpur Patriot again reported the increase of the number of beggars in the state year by year and the presence of a considerable number of landless persons in the state (The Sambalpur Patriot, September 3, 1912).

### 3.6 LAND TENURE SYSTEM AMONG THE SHIFTING-CULTIVATOR TRIBALS

The tribals like the Bhuiyans and the Khonds were enjoying the right of practising shifting cultivation for a very long time. Before the colonial rule, the tribals were giving a nominal tribute in kind to the king. They were supplying vegetables, goats and other wild animals during the festivals

and ceremonies of the Royal family. Pradhan was responsible for the general administration and collection of tribute from the village. But it was only after the British rule that rent was imposed on shifting cultivation. Area under this type of cultivation was measured by the forest department and the rate charged was one rupee and nine annas per man. (Cobden-Ramsay, 1910: 123).

### 3.7 EDUCATION IN BAMRA STATE

Before the British rule, Brahmins were teaching in Pathasalas in traditional way and was restricted only to the higher castes. The Western education started in Bamra in 1892 whereas in Sambalpur it started in 1852. Primary education was free in the state. The king was imposing fine on the parents if they were not sending their children to schools after a certain age. The king was paying special attention towards <sup>the</sup> education of the tribals, especially Bhuiyans and Khonds of Deogarh tahasil of the state. There was a special school for the Gandas at the capital of the state. Along with these modern schools the king was giving financial aid for Pathasalas, the earlier educational institution in the villages.

### 3.8 COMMUNICATION IN BAMRA STATE

Almost all the important places of the state like Deogarh and Kuchinda, the two tahasil head quarters; Bamra



railway station; Balam, the biggest farm house of the king were connected by roads. Besides these there were a number of fair weather roads in the state. The king brought the first motor vehicle in 1904 for his personal use. All the roads were constructed mainly by bethi labour.

There was a telephone line connecting Bamra railway station with Deogarh and Barkots. It was introduced in 1901 in the state.

There was postal services also in the state and it was handed over to imperial post office in 1894.

Electricity was generated from the waterfall of Pradhanpat near Deogarh and was supplied to the Royal palace. It started functioning in 1905.

### 3.9 THE BAMRA KINGS AS MODERNIZERS DURING THE COLONIAL RULE

Bamra become a feudatory state in 1867 during the tenure of Raja Brajasundar Dev, and he died in 1869. After his death, the four kings, who ruled upto the Independence, carried out a lot of developmental work throughout the state. We will discuss the rule of these kings in relation to general administration and developmental work done in the state.

#### (a) Brajasundar Sudhal Dev (1867 - 1869):

He was a popular ruler and improved his territory in all possible ways (Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971:83). He is

known mainly for building and renovating temples.

(b) Basudev Sudhal Dev (1869 - 1903):

Basudev Sudhal Dev, who became the king at the age of 18 years, took over the charge of administration in 1874. He was a scholar in sanskrit and oriya and took keen interest in the spread of education. He set up a number of industries and gave a different direction to the traditional modes of cultivation in the state. The British bestowed on him the title of C.I.E. in 1889 and then K.C.I.E. in 1895 in recognition of his benevolent activities. The achievements during his period are listed below.

(i) He raised the Middle English school of the state to the standard of a High School, known as Rajkumar English High School, which was affiliated to the Calcutta University in District 1885 (Sambalpur/Gazetteers, 1971: 83 and The Sambalpur Patriot, April 20, 1892).

(ii) He started the postal and telegraphic services in the state. During his time there were eleven post offices and two telephone lines, connecting the capital with Govindpur Railway station and Balam, the largest Khamar of the king. The telephone facility was 'free for the citizens of the state' (The Sambalpur Patriot, July 31, 1901).

(iii) The king stopped taking free food from his subjects during his visits. This was the result of a complaint given

by the citizens to the Political Agent incharge of Bamra state (The Sambalpur Patriot, April 19, 1893).

(iv) Balam Khamar, the largest in the state was given special attention of the king, e.g.,

- (a) For irrigation, a canal was dug to bring water from the nearby river and water was stored in ponds.
- (b) The nearby forest areas were cleared to make land cultivable. The irrigation facilities helped the king to get two crops in a year. The productivity went up to 3,000 pudugs<sup>7</sup> in 1899, whereas it was only 300 pudugs during the time of Brajasundar Sudhal Dev (The Sambalpur Patriot, Nov. 1, 1899).
- (c) The plots were prepared geometrically and were named. The king used to give instructions to his managers from the capital either over the phone or by messangers. (The Sambalpur Patriot, Sept. 27, 1899).
- (d) One pump set was installed with a capacity to extract 200 gallons of water per minute in 1901 for the purpose of irrigation (The Sambalpur Patriot, Nov. 27, 1901). There was a facility to pump water upto the height of 70-80 ft. (The Sambalpur Patriot, Feb. 11, 1903).

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7. pudugs is approximately 400 kgs.

to bring them without their consent (The Sambalpur Patriot, July 24, 1895). Thus, by using humanitarian grounds but essentially for self-interest of the necessity of labourers, the king banned the recruitment of labourers for Assam plantations from the state in 1902 (The Sambalpur Patriot, Nov. 29, 1902).

(ix) Almost all the important places and the Khamars were connected by road with the capital (Deogarh). Generally, all the roads were constructed by using bethi labour.

(x) The king used to start work in his Khamars or some other construction work during the failure of crop to provide employment to the affected people (The Sambalpur Patriot, Feb. 4, 1903). The lower caste people were also coming from all parts of the state to work in the Khamars to get prestige in their community.

(xi) The king also took initiative to stop child marriages and unnecessary expenditure on marriages.

So, the initiative taken by the king Basudev Sudhal Dev in all the above modernizing activities was carried on by his successor Sachindanand Tribhuban Dev.

(c) Sachidanand Tribhuban Dev (1903-1916):

Sachidanand Tribhuban Dev was a prolific writer and he had several literary works to his credit. During his rule, The

Sambalpur Patriot, the weekly published from Deogarh became more of a literary one than a news bulletin. During his time, in October 1905, Bamra came under the jurisdiction of the Orissa Division in Bengal. The major achievements of his periods are listed below.

- (i) He introduced the hydro-electric system at the Pradhan Part water fall near the capital, Deogarh, in 1905 and electricity was supplied to the capital. Gradually the electricity supply was extended to the various industries run by the state.
- (ii) Along with the extention of cultivable area of the existing Khamars, he created Khamars in Tusura and Sirgida.
- (iii) He made experiments in the use of fertilizer and methods of cultivation to increase the yield of the fields.
  - (a) He selected four plots and put four types of fertilizers to choose the best one among them. The fertilizers were cowdung, bones of the cows and buffaloes, til and the rotten soil.
  - (b) In another experiment he tried to see the difference between the ploughing in a half grown paddy plants and not ploughing at all after the sowing of paddy.
- (iv) He introduced threshers on his land.

(v) The demand of labourers in the state was so high that he had to advertise for one thousand labourers. He even recruited labourers from nearby states (The Sambalpur Patriot, June 12, 1915).

(vi) There were factories of pottery at Balam and Deogarh and a tile factory was also started at Deogarh. The king sold clothes produced from his factory at a rate less than the prevailing rate of the market. One sugar mill was also set up at Rambhai. He also started a book publishing company at the capital.

(vii) The king appointed a Geologist to search for manganese in the state.

(viii) Several weavers from Bengal were recruited to teach the new type of weaving to weavers of the state so that they could make 2-3 pieces instead of one per day (The Sambalpur Patriot, June 10, 1905).

(ix) Students were sent to Chakradharpur, the nearest forest training centre, to train them in forest management.

(x) When the British were encouraging the people to bring waste land into cultivation with revenue free possession for five years, one had to get permission from the government.

But the enterprising king of Bamra went even a step ahead to raise the revenue and <sup>declared to</sup> acquire the forest land without taking permission of the government (The Sambalpur Patriot June 12, 1905).

(xi) The Dambarudhar Priya Devi Canal project was taken up in 1909 to provide irrigation facility to the cultivators.

(xii) The second hospital of the state was built at Barkote in 1906.

(xiii) The motor transport facility between Govindpur and Deogarh was started in 1915.

(xiv) The use of bethi labour for the construction of roads, temples etc. continued. The king defended bethi as it was for the benefit of the people; if the king spent for everything, then nothing would be left for the welfare and maintenance of the state (The Sambalpur Patriot, May 2, 1914).

(d) Dibyashankar Sudhal Dev (1916-1920):

He remained in power only from 1916 to 1920 and died a premature death. Nothing significant during his rule is known from the available sources.

(e) Bhanuganga Tribhuban Dev (1920-1948):

Bhanuganga Tribhuban Dev, the 30th descendent of the Bamra ruling house, was the last king of Bamra. Bamra was merged with Orissa on January 1, 1948 after the Independence of India. After Independence he continued to represent his constituency in the Orissa Assembly upto 1980. He died in 1981. The developmental work of the last king is somewhat of a different nature as compared to the earlier kings, as

mentioned below.

- (i) The 'Grow More Food' campaign, which was started in the 1930s, continued till the Independence vigorously. The officials and the 'responsible citizens' of the state were asked to educate the people about the necessity to grow more food. The king himself travelled throughout the state to encourage the people (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1942-43).
- (ii) The state reclaimed forest land and gave it to the people to cultivate rent-free for five years.
- (iii) The king distributed seeds of wheat, potatoes, pulses, various vegetables etc. to the people throughout the state.
- (iv) The state continued to spend money to renovate the existing tanks and on new irrigation projects.
- (v) The king planted 300 orange trees in an area of 300 acres at Badbahal.
- (vi) There was a Sal tree plantation area in a 200 acre land near Bamra railway station.
- (vii) There was a model dairy at Deogarh to supply milk to the Royal family and others of the state.
- (viii) One wooden-toys factory was set up at Govindpur.
- (ix) There were twelve Dhanbhadis (Grannaries) in the state to give loans to the needy at a nominal rate.



(x) Primary education was free in the state and special attention was paid to education of children of backward communities.

(xi) Initiative was taken to stop shifting cultivation and the state succeeded in persuading some Bhuiyans and Khonds of the state. Allotment of land, interest free loan, bullocks, seeds, implements were the attractions given to the tribals to give up shifting cultivation.

### 3.10 TRIBALS AND THE BRITISH RAJ

Among all the tribes inhabiting the state, the Bhuiyans occupy an important place. They are the earliest known inhabitants of the state (Bahadur, 1977: 2). It is said that the first Raja of Bamra was a child of the Patna house of Orissa, who was kidnapped from his home and installed as a king of Bamra by Bhuiyans and Khonds. (Russel and Hiralal, 1975: 307). The members of Bhuiyan tribe were the household servants of Bamra Raja's family.

Before the colonial rule, the Bhuiyans practised shifting cultivation freely and gave a nominal tribute in kind to the king. They supplied vegetables, goats and other wild animals during the festivals or ceremonies of the Royal family. The village headmen were in charge of the general administration and collection of tribute from their respective villages.

It is only after the British rule, that rent was imposed on shifting cultivation. The area under shifting cultivation was measured by the forest department and the rate charged was Rs. 1 and nine annas per man. (Cobden-Ramsay, L.E.R., 1910: 123). Then, anticipating trouble by the tribals, the British did not stop it all of a sudden but allowed them to burn the forest for one day only for this type of cultivation (The Sambalpur Patriot, March 14, 1894). Gradually they attracted the shifting cultivators towards settled agriculture to increase the state revenue and also to save the forest for the commercial use. They were asked to apply for the allotment of a forest area to burn and were allowed to cultivate it rent free for five years, or more in some cases. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1942-43, p. 31). The state provided seeds, bullocks, clothes, irrigation facilities and interest free loan from the state grannaries for their food during cultivation of the first year. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1943-44, p. 44). Basudev Sudhal Deb, the then king of Bamra, did not give forest contract to individuals and companies, unlike the nearby states of Rairakhol, Bonai and Sambalpur, and did the business himself under the name of Rajkumar's Sleeper Business from 1888. (The Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971, p. 180). In 1906 he appointed a ranger to hold charge of the forest department. The king demarcated forest into Reserved and Khasa. There

was an area of 452.6 sq. miles of reserved forest out of the total area of 1988 sq. miles of the state. (Report of the Administration of the Bamra State for the year 1938-39: 12).

The grazing charge was also raised from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 per year per pair of bullocks. (The Sambalpur Patriot, Feb. 7, 1894). For the regeneration of the newly cut forest, the state closed that for grazing for five years. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1942-43: 27). The carrot and stick policy, on the one hand putting constraints on the practice of shifting cultivation and on the other hand providing incentives for changing to settled agriculture. The Bhuiyans and Khonds agreed to settle down to wet cultivation in 1940s. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1943-44: 44). At first the Khonds of Kansar block switched over to settled wet cultivation. When Bhuiyans of Pauri saw the benefits given by the state to Khonds, they also approached for bullocks and seeds to take to settled agriculture. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1942-43: 31). It was reported that in the Pauri block where Bhuiyans inhabit, the shifting cultivation was almost stopped and there was a decrease of 320 acres in the entire block of Pauri. The state spent Rs. 3,040/- during 1942-43, Rs. 3,192/- in 1943-44, Rs. 2,926/- in 1944-45 and Rs. 3,081/- in 1945-46 in giving incentives to the shifting cultivators. (Report on the Administration of Bamra State 1942-43, 43-44, 44-45 and 45-46).

The king was visiting the forest areas especially the Pauri block to capture elephants and to hunt the wild animals. The non-tribals were also providing 'bethi' labour in the mission of the king, but the Bhuiyans were playing a key role as they were knowing the ways and movements of the animals in the forest. The tribals were guarding the camp of the king day and night. This was the first major interaction of the hill tribes with the plainspeople of the state. Of course, less number of Bhuiyans were coming to plain areas for 'bethi' because of their special position in the state. Gradually, when the importance of forest was realised during the British rule, they started working with the non-tribals for the cutting of trees of the forest. So the most inaccessible parts of the state also became accessible for the non-tribals and business transaction began to take place between them. Because of the ban on shifting cultivation and even if where it was allowed in a limited areas, the fallow period became short, areas for shifting cultivation continued to be less and less year after year as the population increased and the attraction of market commodities, they were forced to take loan from the nearby non-tribals. The respondents reported that they began to bring loan from the non-tribals in kind during the last phase of the colonial rule. Generally the business of money lending was controlled by Gountias and others revenue free land holders. Since the weekly markets were the only

centres of trading, the king was encouraging the people towards this by not imposing any tax in the less developed areas. (Cobden-Ramsay, L.E.B., 1910: 121).

### 3.11 POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

After Independence, the Government of India has continued with the policies of the colonial government except some populist measures of various Welfare Schemes.

Though the government has been pursuing to stop shifting cultivation fully with incentives and restriction, they have achieved only in some areas. The non-availability of forest produce by which they were managing most of time of the year, wild animals and birds, expensive settled cultivation and lack of irrigation facilities they have been leaving it and going back to the earlier stage of shifting cultivation. "The scheme of settling shifting cultivators on plains land started in 1950. During the ten years from 1950 to 1960, 5,000 families were settled on 25,000 acres of land. Non-availability of suitable lands and reluctance of the tribals in going to far off their present habitation are main impediments in the successful implementation of the scheme." (See Tenth Report Commissioner Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1960-61: 100). Then again it is reported that the shifting cultivators are reluctant to adopt wet cultivation looking at the precarious situation of their fellow people and demanding at

first ensure adequate settlement facilities with allotment of land for agriculture. (Mahapatra, 1968: 404).

The Deogarh and Kuchinda subdivisions of the Sambalpur district, which were the part of Bamra state have a area of 1,045 sq. miles of forest areas out of the total area of 2,352 sq. miles of the district and out of 1,045 sq. miles of the forest areas 480 sq. miles are demarcated as the reserved forest. (The Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971: 175). The reserved forests are leased to individuals and private companies for timber, bamboo and kenduleaves. The contractors make road in the forest areas to bring the forest produce by trucks. So both males and females of the tribal areas get employment there at best for a period of six months and can earn Rs. 600/- to Rs. 800/- during this period. The tribals spend this amount for clothes, food during the lean period and marriages, the repayment of debt and above all in drinking.

The industries which were set up by the king are no more functioning and in the post-Independence period none of the industries of Sambalpur district are found in Bamra state. The Rourkela steel plant and Rajgangpur cement factory of the nearby Sundargarh district mainly attract the people of the state. The tribals of Kuchinda sub-division especially Kisans, Oraons etc. go to these places to work as un-skilled labourers.

The Bhuiyans of Deogarh sub-division mainly work under the jungle contractors, various developmental projects like road, bridge etc., and the non-tribal landlords of the state. The Bhuiyans of both hills and plains areas work as farm labourers of the non-tribal money lenders of the plains areas when they cannot repay the loan. This ensures a steady labour supply for the landlords-cum-moneylenders of the nearby plains areas. They sell various forest produce like fruits, processed roots and tubers, firewood, leave cups in the nearby plains areas and weekly markets.

## CHAPTER IV

### SHIFTING CULTIVATION AND OTHER ALLIED ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AMONG THE BHUIYANS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The agricultural operation of the shifting cultivation is different from the agricultural operation of the settled land cultivation of the plains. Then it also varies from tribe to tribe. So in this chapter at first a general description of shifting cultivation is presented in section 4.2. It is followed by the shifting cultivation in India and Orissa in sections 4.3 and 4.4 respectively. A general description of the distribution of shifting cultivation land in Orissa is described in section 4.5. Then the shifting cultivation among the Bhuiyans is presented in section 4.6. Various patches of shifting cultivation land and the types of labour involved in cultivation are described in sections 4.7 and 4.8 respectively. Agricultural calendar is described in section 4.9. After this other allied economic activities like hunting (4.10), food gathering (4.11) and hiring out of labour to the jungle contractors (4.12) are described.

#### 4.2 SHIFTING CULTIVATION

Shifting cultivation is the primitive system of land use which started from the neolithic period (Childe, 1956). 200 million people covering an area of 36 million sq. kms



(Banerjee, 1972) are still at this primitive stage of cultivation. This type of cultivation is generally found in the hilly areas "with high rainfall and high temperature, where the conditions are more suitable for the quick growth of plants" (Bose, 1982: 216). These areas are generally not well connected with the outside world either by road or rail-ways. They generally inhabit in the hilly tracts of bordering areas of different states (Vidyarthi and Rai, 1977: 122). The inaccessibility of the area prevents the developed people to settle down in those areas and on the other hand the shifting cultivators prefer to stay there because of the availability of various types of fruits, roots, tubers and wild animals from which they live a substantial period of the year. The limited contact with the outsiders helps them to pursue their customs and traditions on their own way. The technique of cultivation is almost same everywhere with their indigenous tools (Bose, 1982: 216). The use of better metal implements can be attributed only to the degree of exposure of that society with the outside world. The population pressure and the restriction of the respective governments on the destruction of forests lessen the land-man ratio and consequently the fallow period also becomes short. The repeated and continuous cultivation of the same patch for some years started because of the scarcity of forest land. The first intensive cultivation of the forest land was

started by men because of the demographic reason (Godelier, 1972: 312). The intensive cultivation brings better implements with it from outside and changes the communal nature of the society. The vast area of the land, various operations and the surroundings of it require the communal effort of the society. The intensification of the cultivated land lessens the area and requires capital for preparation, operation and implements for a better yield. This is the way how the egalitarian society gives way to the class society in the due course of time.

#### 4.3 SHIFTING CULTIVATION IN INDIA

Shifting cultivation is practised in almost all the tropical hilly areas of various states in India. The states like Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, where the ecological surroundings are suitable for this type of cultivation, it is practised widely, whereas in states like Kerala, Karnataka, Sikkim, Gujarat and Bihar, it is practised on a smaller scale. (See Table No. 4.1 for the location, population and areas covered by this type of cultivation).

TABLE 4.1: Names of tribes and their population, practising shifting cultivation, areas in which this practice is followed in the States/Union Territories and acreage under shifting cultivation

Name of the State	Name of the Tribes	Total Population depending on shifting cultivation (Approx.)	Total acreage of land utilised for shifting cultivation (acres)	Name of the district, division areas where shifting cultivation is carried on
1	2	3	4	5
Andhra Pradesh	Bagata, Gadabas, Kammaras Konda-Kapus, Konda-Reddis, Londa-Dbors, Malis, Manna Dhora, Nayaks, Dorjas, Rena, Savaras.	2,00,000	96,000	Srikakulam district, Agency tracts Visakhapatnam District, East Godavari district, West Godavari District.
Assam	Chakma, Garo, Jaintia, Khasi, Lushai, Lalung, Mikir, Mizo, Naga	9,79,000	5,08,800	Garo Hills, United Mikir and North Cachar Hills, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Naga Hill district, Plain district of Kamrup, Nowgong of Cachar.
Biher	Birjia, Kharja, Norwe, Mal-Pharia, Sauria Pharia	1,15,000	436	Singhbhum, Santhal Parganas, Ranchi district.
Gujarat	Bhil, Kunbi, Kokenis, Mavchi.	25,000*	73,300*	Dang district and in some parts of Surat district.
Kerala	Irular, Kurumbas, Kurichians, Mudugar, Paniyan	10,000	10,000	Attapaddy Amson, Valluvanad taluk, Malabar district

contd....

(TABLE 4.1: Contd.)

1	2	3	4	5
Madhya Pradesh	Agariya, Baiga, Bharia, Gond, Korava, Wodaku, Madia, Majhwar, Mawasi.	30,000	9,47,680	Durg, Bastar Chhindwar, Chanda, Balaghat, Nandia, Raigarh.
Madras	Kadar, Kurumbas, Malasar, Pulayanas, Paniyan	2,200	3,000	Coimbatore district, Nilgiris district.
Maharashtra	Halkki, Kotari, Kunbi, Kumari, Marahata, Maria, Gond, Thakur, Wakhela	*	*	Kolaba district, South Chanda Divn., Janjira Sub-division.
Mysore	Bettakuruba, Jenukuruba, Kanbis, Kuman, Marati, Soligars.	14,000	2,500	Interior mountainous tracts of Belgaum and South Kanara district.
Orissa	Bhuiyan of Bhuyan, Bhunjia, Gadaba, Jatapu, Juang, Kondakoya, Khanda, Kotia, Paroja, Saora.	9,35,700	4,00,000	Keonjhar, Sundergarh, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Ganjam, Koraput.
West Bengal	Toto	not available	not available	Jalpaiguri District.
Manipur	Angami, Kabui, Kacha-Nagar, Maring, Tangkhul	1,83,000	54,000	In the hill tracts of the Union Territory.
Tripura	Chalma, Garo, Halam, Jamatia, Kuki, Lushai, Mag, Noatia, Reang, Tripura.	95,501	1,16,900	Sadar Khawai, Kailashahar, Kamalpur, Sonemura, Belonia and Amarapur Sub-division.
Total		25,89,401	22,75,616	

\* Both for Gujarat and Maharashtra.

It is known by various names in different regions.

(Jhum in Assam, Tekonglu in Nagaland, Adiakik in Arunachal Pradesh, Hoknismong in Tripura, Talia, Dahi and Podu in Orissa, Penda, Bewar, Dipa and Dahia in Madhya Pradesh, Watra in Rajasthan, Waler in Gujarat, Kumri in Tamil Nadu, Kumari in Western Ghats and Kumaro and Khallu in Bihar). Though the operation of this type of cultivation is almost same everywhere, the year of holding of a patch, and fallow period vary from each other mainly because of the density of the population.

The very character of the cultivation does not allow to own the forest land privately by an individual. It is owned by the entire village or by the chief of the clan, where the clan head takes the responsibility to distribute the land according to the need of the concerned families. After the distribution of the land an individual owns the allotted patch for a specific period and then again leaves that for regeneration. Since, there is no rule that a specific patch will be cultivated by the same person, whenever that comes under cultivation, the landed property is owned jointly.

The carrying capacity of the soil varies from region to region. The fertility of the soil, rainfall density of population and the availability of forest land affect the general social structure of that society. (See Table No. 4.2 for the carrying capacity of the land under shifting cultivation).

TABLE 4.2 : Carrying capacity of land under shifting cultivation in their regions.

	South Mizoram	Keonjhar Hills	Abujhmar Hills
Rainfall	330	165	145
Average slope	220	190	160
Shifting cycle in years	6	12	18
Years of holding the land	1	2	2
Percentage of cultivable land	34	54	29
Production rate of crops in kg. per acre	540	225	340
Present density of population per km.	5.1	24.4	2.4
Carrying density per km.	14.5	9.5	5.5

From the table, it is marked that in Keonjhar area of Orissa the high density of population and the low yield in their fields, they find it difficult to eke out their livings with their traditional economic activities. The high percentage

of cultivable land in Keonjhar area in comparison to the other two, encourages some towards the settled cultivation where as others are forced to migrate either to the shifting cultivation areas of their nearby places or to the plains areas for wages. Then the imposition of taxes, rents and grazing charges during the colonial regime and grazing charges and illegal exaction of money by forest officials in Post-Independence period force them to borrow from the local non-tribal money-lenders. The manufactured goods of the outside world like clothes, iron implements and especially tobacco, which they do not produce enter into their society by local non-tribal traders to make them more dependent on the market. When the tribals created problem for the colonial government, they tried to control them indirectly by making their economy more diversified without interfering in their traditional administrative set up. (Majumdar, 1980). As a consequence of this the non-tribals entered into their area to capture the land which was waiting for cultivation and in due course of time land became a saleable and transferable commodity during the British regime.

#### 4.4 SHIFTING CULTIVATION IN ORISSA

The tribals of Orissa practise shifting cultivation in some form or other in almost all districts. The hill Bonda, Koya, Khond, Paraja, Gadaba, Saora of Koraput district, Saora of Ganjam district and Khond of Phulbani and ~

Kalahandi, Pauri Bhuiyan and Khond of Sambalpur district numbering about 9,35,700 practise shifting cultivation in a areas of 4,00,000 acres. The shifting cultivators of Orissa constitute 36.13% of the total shifting cultivators in India and cover an area of 17.57% of the total land utilised for it. The total estimated population and area include both the exclusively shifting cultivators and others who are akin to this type of cultivation (see map 2.1 for the areas of shifting cultivation in Orissa). Those are Taungya cultivation, Dahia cultivation and Thaila cultivation. Taungya cultivation is that one where the Government allows the tribals to cultivate a patch of forest like the shifting cultivation, rent free and asks them to grow forest trees in it. "It corresponds more or less to agrosilviculture which is conspicuous by its absence in any part of Orissa (Patnaik, 1982: 250).

In Dahia cultivation the branches of the trees of the nearby forest areas are cut and spread over the settled land. The burnt branches provide manure to the settled land. Another form of Dahia cultivation is again to manure the field but the process is quite different to the first. Here, instead of carrying the branches to the field, they cut the branches in the hill slopes and burn before the rainfall, so that the rainfall automatically brings down the ashes to the proposed field.



Thalia or Gora cultivation is also more or less like shifting cultivation with the only exception that it is situated at the foot hills or slightly sloping land.

#### 4.5 OWNERSHIP OF LAND UNDER SHIFTING CULTIVATION IN ORISSA

In the past villages were established mainly by one clan and hence the land was owned by all the villagers. The head of the clan with the assistance of other family heads used to distribute land among the villagers. When the relatives and other tribals came to settle in the village, the same principle continued.

Where as the Bhuiyans, Juangs and Khonds own the forest land jointly, the Bonda, Koya and Saora of Koraput and Ganjam district own the land like private property (Mahapatra and Devi, 1972-73). Among Bonda and Saora each household owns a number of sites, inherited by the sons and even sold or mortgaged like the settled wet lands of the plains areas, the mortgaging of the swiddens is mainly confined to the Saora. Though the private ownership of the swiddens among Saoras, Bondas and Koyas is an exception in the primitive land use system, they still maintain the tradition of reciprocity and co-operative effort in the cultivation since shifting cultivation requires communal effort in most of its operation and hence the private ownership has not been able to change most

of the primitive ways of the exploitation of the resources. They work in each others fields without wages and do not consider the exchange of labour also strictly. So when all the other related activities are more or less similar how private ownership of swiddens came to that society, remains mysterious as the author has not explained it historically.

#### 4.6 SHIFTING CULTIVATION AMONG THE BHUIYANS

The Bhuiyans of the hilly areas practise mainly shifting cultivation. They call it Biringā. The cultivated patch is called as Kamāna and to distinguish one from the other they refer to the predominant crop of that patch like Biri (Urd) Kamana, Dhana (Paddy) Kamana and Jali (a type of millet) Kamana. The sites are named after the respective names of the hills.

The fallow period varies from 4 to 12 years mainly because of the size of the forest areas and population of the respective villages. But in Bamra area it varies from 4 to 8 years.<sup>1</sup> Each and every household owns three patches of shifting land. The entire land is owned jointly by the villagers. The headman distributes the patches to the villagers every year with the help of other heads of the families

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1. Data collected by the authors from all the villages of Bamra, where shifting cultivation is practised.

of the village. The distribution pattern maintains the egalitarian principle, by distributing equally among the villagers irrespective of the strength of the families, where the forest area is too small to allot on the basis of labour power of the respective families. But where the forest area is more the villagers cultivate on the basis of the labour power of the concerned family. The villagers are not allowed to sell or mortgage their share to the comparatively well-to-do persons like the Bondas and Saoras of Koraput district of Orissa. Since the allotted Khasra forest for shifting cultivation is demarcated by the government to the respective villages, there is no dispute regarding the boundary between the villages. There are some cases where the well-to-do families manage to get a share of the shifting land from the nearby villages. These families bribe the headman and his allies of the concerned village to get the share.

#### 4.7 TYPES OF SHIFTING LAND AND THE CROPS GROWN IN THOSE PATCHES

The Bhuiyans of Bamra cultivate the same patch continuously for three years and then leave that for regeneration. The site-patch matrix is given below to show the possession of patches at a time among the Bhuiyans ( See Table 4.3 ).

TABLE 4.3: Site patch matrix of shifting cultivation to show the holding, fallow period and the cropping pattern among the Bhuiyans

---

<u>Year</u>			
1981	B	D	J
	n <sub>3</sub>	n <sub>2</sub>	n <sub>1</sub>
1982	D	J	B
	n <sub>3</sub>	n <sub>2</sub>	n <sub>4</sub>
1983	J	B	D
	n <sub>3</sub>	n <sub>5</sub>	n <sub>4</sub>
1984	B	D	J
	n <sub>6</sub>	n <sub>5</sub>	n <sub>4</sub>
1985	D	J	B
	n <sub>6</sub>	n <sub>5</sub>	n <sub>7</sub>
1986	J	B	D
	n <sub>6</sub>	n <sub>1</sub>	n <sub>7</sub>
1987	B	D	J
	n <sub>2</sub>	n <sub>1</sub>	n <sub>7</sub>

---

Subscript indicates site.

Subscript indicates patch or crop.

B = Stands for Birhi

D = Stands for Dhana

J = Stands for Jali

n<sub>1</sub> to n<sub>7</sub> are sites.

Row indicates any one year.

Box indicates a seven year cycle.

(a) Birhi Kamana:

In this patch they mainly grow Birhi(Urd) along with Tilā (a variety of til) Dhunka, (a variety of beans), Rainsā, Suturi ( a varieties of millet) cocumber and pumpkin. All the above mentioned beans, millets and even Birhi are peculiar to the Bhuiyans. The vegetables cocumber, pumpkin etc. are grown recently, most probably after their contact with the outside world. Henceforth we will call this as the first patch.

(b) Dhana Kamana or Jala:

In the second year of cultivation of the same patch, they grow paddy, maize, gangei, mandia or kada, kangu, Tisdia. Among all the crops of this patch, only māndia, maize and gangei are grown in the nearby plains areas where as kāngu and tisdia and even the variety of paddy are peculiar to the Bhuiyans. The names of the various varieties of paddy grown here are Junā and Barhāchāli. In case of the non-availability of this variety they do not take the seed from the non-tribals and bring from other shifting cultivation villages. Henceforth we will call this as the second patch.

(c) Jali Kamana or Nala:

This is the third and the last year of cultivation of the same patch. Here they grow some poor millets like Jali

or gangei.

After two years of cultivation, it does not have sufficient grown bushes to provide ashes as the manure. So it is not burnt like the above two patches. It attracts less to the Bhuiyans and even in most of the cases it is abandoned for the natural recovery. It again becomes Birhi Kamana after the stipulated fallow period. Henceforth we will call this as the third patch.

#### 4.8 TYPES OF LABOUR

The labour intensive cultivation of this type of land requires more labour. Since, the members of one family find it difficult to manage various agricultural operations in time, they hire labour from other members of the village. In this section, various types of labour found among the Bhuiyans is described.

##### (a) Wage Labour:

When the Bhuiyans work in their own society, they get four kgs. of paddy along with breakfast and lunch. The villagers rarely hire wage labours for various operations of shifting cultivation. They hire mainly for the difficult and hard jobs like cutting of the trees of swiddens and weeding. The demand of wage labourers by the landowners of the nearby plains areas also sometime attract the Bhuiyans,

where they get comparatively less than their own society. If they go for wages during harvesting they get 4 kgs. of paddy as wages and lunch, where as for other work they get only 4 kgs. of paddy. The Bhuiyans do not go to the distant villages for wages though the wages is quite higher than the nearby plains area villages. They justify the higher rate, which includes breakfast, lunch excluding the payment as only the members of their society are benefitted by that. They give more importance to the food than the payment as the hiring of labourers is done mainly during the lean period. Sometimes the employer gives the wages after harvesting and only gives the food to the labourers.

(b) Exchange Labour:

They exchange the labour among themselves during the various operation of shifting cultivation. Here also breakfast and lunch is essential. They do not calculate the number of days of work strictly. So far as one does not have his own work and gets food, he readily accepts the task of working for the needy villagers.

(c) Labour Provided by Relatives:

During the peak season of cultivation, mainly during cutting of trees, weeding and harvesting, they invite the relatives of other villages to help them. The relatives are

drawn both from the plains and hilly areas. During their stay the invitee only gives food to them and after harvesting at the time of their departure he gives them some of the produce of their fields, rice or paddy.

(d) Labour by the Villagers for Feast:

This type of labour is called Bāj among Bhuiyans. Here one man from each family work half day for the person who gives a goat for the feast of the village. Generally, the concerned person gives that animal during the festival and gets the labour during the cultivation time. Sometime the villagers decide long before the festival for this type of arrangement where as in some cases the concerned individual approaches the village council for this type of labour. The price of the animal does not correspond to the wages, what they would have got in the as usual cases. The possession of domestic animals is considered to be beneficial for them, as most of them are getting their way out to the non-tribal traders and moneylenders.

(e) Labour by the Unmarried Boys and Girls for Feast:

This type of labour is also called Bāj. If a villager is in need of labour for his agricultural operation approaches the unmarried boys or the girls of the village and strikes a bargain with them. They get the wages in kind like chickens,



rice and sometimes in cash, which is spent mainly for the treatment of the boys and girls, who come to the village for dancing. After harvesting usually the unmarried boys and occasionally girls also visit various Bhuiyan villages for dancing and on such occasions the boys and girls feel it as their responsibility to treat them properly. Besides this, whenever two or more boys come to the village in some pretext or other, the girls of the village invite them for a dance in the night and in the last night the girls arrange a feast in their honour. This is applicable to the boys also. Since all the unmarried boys and girls are attached with this type of labour, it is a case of their Durbar (youth dormitory). It is prevalent in almost all tribal societies (Sachidananda, 1966: 100). Here also like the previous Bāj, the payment is not made just on the day of the labour, but when the boys and girls require take from the concerned persons.

Among all the types of labour excluding the first one, others are peculiar to the tribal societies. They decide the mode of payment suitable to their society, and pay mainly after the harvesting. When they need more labour especially during weeding, they give goats, chicken, home prepared beer to the labourers, which cost much less than the prevailing wage rates. The payment in kind is given more importance than the cash. During summer, when they get employment under jungle contractors, they demand more than the prevailing rate

to the non-tribal employers. The non-tribal people hire the tribals for the cutting of bamboos and firewood in the forest for their personal use and have to pay Rs. 5 to 6 per day to them.

#### 4.9 AGRICULTURAL CALENDER

Among Bhuiyans, after houses have been repaired or built in March the village council under the leadership of the headman decides the suitable patch for Biringā. Where the forest areas is limited, they distribute the specific patch equally among the villagers and where there is more forest areas, they decide on the basis of the growth of vegetation of the various patches. Then they decide a day for the felling of trees of their respective patches. The agricultural calender of shifting cultivation includes selection and cutting of forest, burning and removing of wood, sowing, weeding, watching, harvesting, worshipping and merry making (Vidyarthi, 1963: 33), and is almost same among all the shifting cultivators of the world. But with the changed situation, the method of operation has also changed considerably. The techniques of cultivation is more developed where the shifting cultivators are exposed to the outside world more and variations are even found within the same society, where the elites interact more with the outsiders than their fellow beings.

Since the interest in various patches of shifting cultivation decreases after every year of cultivation of the patch, the Bhuiyans take more interest in completing various operations on the first patch in time. Then the operation of the plots varies because of the variety of crops grown in those patches. The description of various operation of each patches is given below.

(a) First Patch of Shifting Cultivation:

(i) Ghuchākatā (cutting of bushes):

After the distribution of site, at first the women cut the small bushes of the first patch in the month of chaitra. Since it does not require hard work and is considered a boring job by the men, women are given the task of this operation.

(ii) Gachakatā (cutting of trees):

Since it requires hard work, men generally do this job. They do not cut the fruit trees like mango, mahua, khajur, etc. of the field. Some of the small trees are also left, which provide support for a variety of beans. They start the work in the field from early morning and return home as the afternoon heat reaches its height. During this time they invite their relatives from the plains areas to help them in finishing this operation. The widows or where adult male members are absent, hire labour or seek the help of kins for this job.

This operation takes 10-20 mandays. After the cutting of trees they stop the work of the first patch and allow the logs and branches to become dry for a month. Sometimes an early monsoon lengthen the period of drying.

(iii) Dāhi lagā (burning of leaves and small branches):

Before burning the patch, they clear the adjoining areas of the nearby forest to prevent the fire for further burning of forests.

Dāhilagā is done after 15 days of the previous operation. All the small branches and leaves are spread all over the field and burnt. The new born bushes are perished and logs are also partially burnt. The supporting trees for the beans are burnt in a special way by heaping leaves and small dry branches around the base. This is done primarily by the men and since it does not require more mandays they do not take outside labour. It takes hardly 2-5 mandays of labour.

(iv) Adāpudā (burning of logs):

This comes after 15 days of the previous one. A successful burn and proper distribution all over the field is essential for a better yield. Generally it takes 4-6 mandays of labour and in some cases where the logs are not dried fully takes a longer time. They do not require outside labour for this operation.

(v) Birhi Bunā (sowing of Urd.):

After one or two heavy rainfall, the soil becomes cool and light. The men broadcast the seeds of Birhi Tilā, cucumber, pumpkin all over the field in a rainy day and at the same time women cut the new born bushes of the field. The women cut the bushes by a sickle and keep wherever they cut the bushes. This operation is called Pāti katā. So both the operations of Birhi Bunā and Pātikatā go simultaneously. They dig small holes with the help of a digging stick around the supporting trees for beans and plant the seed in those holes. It takes one to two days and does not require outside labour.

(vi) Ghāsa Bachā (weeding):

It comes in the month of September-October. This is a labour intensive and lengthy operation. All the types of labour are utilised in this operation. It takes 60-140 mandays and ends in November.

(vii) Rākshyasi Pujā (Puja of the Demon):

During the weeding they collect half kg. of rice and a chicken from each and every household holding shifting land and perform Pujā in the middle of the land to satisfy their forest deity. The women and children are not allowed to see this Pujā.

(viii) Watching:

Since the wild animals like bear, Sambhar, wild boar, monekey and the birds destroy the crops, they watch the field day and night. They prepare small huts above the ground called Bhādi in the middle or on a slightly high place of their fields, which acts as the temporary home for them upto the harvesting of the crops. The burning logs under the Bhādi save them from winter and also help them to light their Pikā (home made tobacco pipe) throughout the day. In the morning, when men return to the village, the children go to the field mainly to scare the birds. During the day time when the wild animals do not come, they sleep in the Bhādis and give the responsibility of watching to women and children. In the night time the men, sometime with their wives beat tins, Chāngu (drum used by the tribals) and shout to scare the wild animals. Most of the families cook their food in the field and stay there day and night.

(ix) Harvesting:

They keep on harvesting the crop from October and finish in the latter phase of November. Since they grow a variety of crops, the harvesting time of one differs from the other. This gives a sort of security to the Bhuiyans.

(x) Threshing:

Birhi and Tilā, the two predominant crops of this patch are not brought to a specified threshing ground. A small patch in the middle of the field is cleared and all the uprooted plants are heaped there. When that is dried, they thresh by a stick.

(xi) Storing:

At first they store the seed for the next year of cultivation and the rest is spent on repaying loan, meeting the social obligation, selling and consumption. They store the seed in a pot prepared from the leaves of the sāl tree.

(b) Dhāna Kamāna or The Second Patch:

Since this is the second year of cultivation of the same patch, it requires less number of operations than the previous one. The various operations are mentioned below.

(i) Jagarā (cutting of bushes):

After adāpudā, the fourth operation of the first patch women start the clearance of this patch in the month of April. During the cultivation, all the family members remain busy in some or other work in the field. While the women are busy in the Jagarā of the second patch, men are busy in the Adāpudā of the first patch. As the bushes cannot become big

within four months, it takes hardly 5-10 mandays for the entire operation. The children also help the women in it.

(ii) Dāhi lagā (burning of bushes):

After 6-7 days of the previous one men burn the bushes spreading all over the field. It takes 2-3 mandays.

(iii) Deradalā (sowing, ploughing and cutting of Bushes):

This operation has three parts and all of them go simultaneously.

(1) At first women cut the new born bushes and grasses by sickles.

(2) The men broadcast paddy mixing with maize all over the field. The cereals like Gangei, Mandiā and Kāngu are sown on the boundaries of the field in a rainy day. These cereals grow upto the height of 6-8 feet and act as the boundary.

(3) After the broadcasting of seed men plough the field only once and where they find difficulty in ploughing till that small area by an implement called gardani or kānka. All these activities require a number of persons to complete in the stipulated time and hence they exchange labour with the villagers. They hire ploughs also and in return they give only liquor and food. It takes 6-10 mandays.



The ploughing of the field is done only once and the plough share does not penetrate more like the plains wet land . This prevents the soil erosion of that sloping land. So it implies that the only purpose of ploughing the field is to mix the seeds with the soil as the amount of ashes is very less in comparison to the first patch.

The ploughing is mainly done by the cows as the bullocks are taken away by the plains dwellers in some pretext or other and the Bhuiyans also do not consider a good, intensive ploughing essential for a better yield. In the beginning, when they had less contact with the nearby plain areas, they were using bullocks for ploughing. The bullocks are also comparatively stronger than the bullocks of the nearby areas as they get grazing fields abundantly and the Bhuiyans do not milk the cows. In the earlier time cattle wealth was considered more prestigious as transactions was made in marriages. So considering the traditional value system of the tribals and also the diversified economy, the non-tribals exchange a bullock with two cows. And since then, through money lending, exchange with cows and purchasing, the non-tribals have been taking away the bullocks of the Bhuiyans.

(iv) Weeding:

Like the weeding of the first patch, here also it takes a long time and requires more labour. They start the weeding

of this patch before the first one. The duration of this operation depends on the type of land and the burning of the bushes.

(v) Watching:

The watching of this field becomes more important than the previous patch because of the crops like maize, Gangei, which the bears attack frequently day and night. Since the strength of these types of plant is very weak, even when the bear moves in the field it destroys all the crops including the paddy. The tribals make more Bhādis than the previous patch in this field. They erect the effigies of human beings with the help of straw and clothes all over the field to scare the animals and birds. The watching continues upto the harvesting of all the crops of the field.

(vi) Harvesting:

Here paddy, the main crop of the field is harvested at first and then Gangei, Māndiā, Tisdiā, Kāngu are harvested respectively. Paddy is not harvested on the basis of start to finish procedure. Since the maize, mandiā and tisdiā are grown all over the field, they harvest paddy in a tricky way so that other plants will not be destroyed. Then due to the scarcity of food during that period they eat most of the harvested paddy of each and every day. In the case of maize also the eating and selling continues everyday upto the end of

harvesting. Gangei, Mandiā and Tisdiā are harvested on the start to finish principle as these are not suitable to consume just after harvesting.

(c) Jali Kamana or the Third Patch:

As we have mentioned elsewhere, the Bhuiyans generally neglect the third patch. If at all, it is to be cultivated, it does not need the elaborate procedure like the first two patches. They either burn, or cut the grasses and bushes at first and plough the field once. If the patch is near any of the first two plots, they watch the crop or else leave it for the mercy of the wild animals.

All the above mentioned operations signify that the Bhuiyans remain very busy during the agricultural season. The women play an important role as they perform some specific operations, which men do not like to do. It is not because of the cooking and sex, the widower marry in a comparatively older age, but to get a pair of helping hands in the cultivation. The efficient management and the completion of various operations in time require more labour power mainly because of the very character of cultivation and the absence of better implements. And when one manages to do that gets some surplus, which ultimately he invests either in shifting cultivation or in some other activities. The contact with the outside

world raises the various requirements of the life and consequently he tries to maximize the level of production in some way or other within the prevailing resources instead of switching over to a better one all of a sudden to meet the new types of requirements (Godelier, 1972: 3).

#### 4.10 HUNTING

Hunting of wild animals, though no more frequent among the Bhuiyans because of the less number of animals in the Pauri, hunting season starts ritually after harvesting. In the month of Beishakha (March-April), the villagers decide a day for Paridhi Puja, a ritual related to the hunting expedition. They collect a tambi (approximately one kg.) of paddy from all the families of the village and women prepared Chuna (rice flour) out of the collected amount of paddy. On that particular day, wife of the Headman alongwith the entire women folk of the village handover the arrow and bow to the Headman and other good hunters and wish the menfolk good luck. Women also perform puja to their deities for the success of the hunters. The hunters prepare cake from the rice flour on the side of a forest stream and start their hunting expedition. A group of good hunters wait silently with their bows and arrows covering an area of half kilometre, while the other group shout, throw stones and beat the nearby bushes and force the animals to move towards the waiting hunters. When the animals cross the

hunters while running for their lives, they shoot the animals. The hunters are also warned of the type of the animals e.g., wild boar, deer, bear, nilgai, of the covered area. But the success of the hunters depend on the speed of the animals, and the distance of the passing animals from the hunters. Sometimes the animals are hit but do not fall there and in such cases all of them follow the wounded animals till the dead bodies are found. In some cases, this search takes days together. The attempt is mixed with success and failure.

If the hunters cannot shoot the animals, all of them rest for sometime and discuss about the problems underlying the failure. Both the groups blame each other and especially to the concerned hunters if the animals pass near them. Again, they move to the next forest areas and follow the above mentioned procedure of hunting. The expedition continues for 3-4 days if they do not succeed in hunting atleast one animal and during these days they eat cakes prepared from rice flour or become the guests of a nearby village.

Besides the above mentioned season, they also go for hunting in December-January, when the boars, deers and nilgai come to eat the crops of the swidden land. But, during this time, they rarely succeed as the animals do not become visible due to the growth of bushes in the forest. They prefer the summer season for hunting because by this time they are free

from cultivation and wild animals cannot run for a long time. Also, the heat destroys most of the cover for the wild animals. The tribals can easily mark the movement of animals. The implements used for hunting are bows, arrows and axes. Bita is used with the bows to shoot at birds. Bhuiyans always move with the bows, arrows, Bita or/and axes. They remain always watchful while passing through the forest. All the adult males take part in the hunting expedition. Even the younger boys of 8-10 years of age also go for hunting with the villagers.

The non-tribals also come to the forest with guns to hunt wild boar, deer and peacock. During this time, they take the help of the Bhuiyans as they are well aware of the movement of the animals and also the forest pathways. If the non-tribals succeed in their mission, Bhuiyans get a share of the hunt, otherwise they do not get any payment. But, the Bhuiyans eagerly come forward to help the non-tribal hunters. All of them get equal share except the Pradhan of the village gets a additional share and the concerned shooter gets the head of the animal.

#### 4.11 FOOD GATHERING

Bhuiyans go for food gathering throughout the year due to the availability of roots, tubers and fruits.

During the rainy season they collect the roots and tubers like Pitalu, Bainga, Maradhi and fruits like Chalara, Ghurudu, and various types of mushroom. The implements used in digging the soil to collect roots and tubers are Khanta, Kodi, Gainti and Sabal. They exchange processed pitalu (bitter tuber) and various types of mushroom in the nearby weekly market with Khai, paddy, vegetables etc. Besides these they collect bamboo shoots and make Karadi and Hendua from them. This is exchanged in the market with paddy and vegetables and they keep some for their own consumption.

During winter they collect various types of forest Potatoes and fruits like mahua, sal etc. Mahua flower is exchanged with salt, which is stored for the whole year. They also prepare liquor from the mahua flower.

During summer they collect roots and tubers like forest potatoes like tunga and fruits like mango, Kendu, Char, and dimbiri. They exchange mangoes, dimbiri, kendu and char with paddy and vegetables and sometimes receive money from the buyers. They prepare cakes out of mango juice and sell in the market for money. They process the mango kernel and store for the whole year, which they eat during the lean period. Lac and honey are collected and sold for money. The fruits which have got medicinal value like harda, bahada and ainla are also collected and sold to the agents of the businessmen.

#### 4.12 HIRING OUT OF LABOUR TO FOREST CONTRACTORS

The agents of forest contractors, both timber and bamboo, came to the tribal villages from October onwards to recruit labourers. The contractors usually provide the implements necessary for the work except the axe. The preference of the tribals between these two contractors, timber and bamboo, depends on their economic condition. The timber contractor gives the wages once in 2-3 months. The well-to-do tribals go for bamboo contractors whereas the poor ones prefer the other one. The forest contractors also recruit the tribals, both men and women for the construction of the forest road. Here, generally the women work.

This is how the Bhuiyans remain busy throughout the year. The surrounding forest gives them food. Apart from the land for shifting cultivation, fruits of various kinds, edible leaves, honey, nourishing roots and wild game become possible only because of the forest areas around them. But when the role of the forest decreases on the lives of the shifting cultivator tribals, a different type of picture emerges in their societies.



## CHAPTER V

### DIFFERENTIATION AMONG THE SHIFTING CULTIVATORS AND PEASANTISATION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

As we pointed out in chapter I, some of the studies conducted in 1970s among the shifting cultivators ~~did~~ pointed out the differentiation in opposition to the view of "inconceivability of surplus production in these societies" (Goswami, 1971). In this chapter to show the differentiation among the Bhuiyans we will discuss about the distribution of swidden land in Biringapur in section 5.2. In section 5.3, the differentiation will be analysed and again in the same manner in section 5.4 and 5.5 the distribution of shifting cultivation land and the differentiation among the villagers of Mishapur will be discussed. Then in section 5.6, the differentiation will be demonstrated on the basis of the ownership of metal implements in both the villages. After this the process of peasantisation, where the shifting cultivator tribals shift to the practice of settled agriculture will be discussed in section 5.7.

#### 5.2 DISTRIBUTION OF SWIDDEN LAND IN BIRINGAPUR

There are 16 sites of shifting cultivation in village Biringapur. These are named after the respective hills of the forest. In this village, the sites may be classified into

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\* Part of this chapter is published (see Jairath and Naik, 1983: 31-43).

three types on the basis<sup>of</sup> the fertility of the soil as listed below:

(A) First Category Sites:

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| (1) <u>Semandā</u>   | (2) <u>Sāndhoi</u>  |
| (3) <u>Gajāpatar</u> | (4) <u>Kalghand</u> |

(B) Second Category Sites:

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| (1) <u>Badāghar,</u> | (2) <u>Mushabāhi</u> |
| (3) <u>Haldipāni</u> |                      |

(C) Third Category Sites:

- |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) <u>Banighar</u>    | (2) <u>Itāpar,</u>           |
| (3) <u>Gadāniān</u>    | (4) <u>Pakānipakā Tāngru</u> |
| (5) <u>Jhirpāni</u>    | (6) <u>Purunādihi</u>        |
| (7) <u>Chandāchuān</u> | (8) <u>Meshānitā</u>         |
| (9) <u>Dhaltāngar</u>  |                              |

Among all the plots of the first category, semandā is the most fertile area. So they distribute that equally among themselves. But in the case of rest of the sites, the plots are distributed by the headman with the help of his allies. The villagers cultivate more on the basis of their surplus rather than the labour power of their respective families. Since we find it difficult to measure the shifting cultivation land because of its vastness and the objection of the villagers, the amount of seed sown has been treated as an index t o

measure the plots.

At first let us see the ownership pattern of the various categories of swidden land by the villagers. There are only three households, the headman, his son and brother who hold the first category land for shifting cultivation, 18 households cultivate all categories of land and the rest seven households hold only the third category of land. Among the seven households owning the third category of land, six are migrants. Selection of partners for the cultivation in one area is no more the kinship. They prefer friends than their kinsmen.

The villagers prefer to keep all the three patches of shifting land in one place mainly for the suitability of watching the fields. And here also the "elites" succeed in achieving their goals.

Among the villagers three households, the headman's son, brother and a priest hold all the three patches of shifting land in one place, fifteen households hold two patches in one place and the rest seven households hold the patches separately. As three **families** came to the village this year, they are having only the first patch of shifting land. The acquisition of all the three patches in one site help them to watch the crops in a better way and consequently they get better output with less labour unlike those who hold the patches in different areas. Then if all the patches or atleast the third patch is attached either with the first or second patch, they generally

do not neglect the third patch.

Since the availability of fertile area near the village is less, the selection of the sites depend mainly on the labour power and in some cases on the surplus of the concerned families.

All the sixteen sites of shifting land mentioned earlier are around the village. The villagers usually select the area near to their respective hamlets. And within all these traditional ways of distribution, the "elites" take the suitable patches.

Before Independence, when the villagers were not brought down to the plains to stop shifting cultivation, they were cultivating in one or two sites under the strict leadership of the headman. But when they came back from the plains in 1955 leaving their settled land and houses, the new and the present headman at first broke the rule and selected the fertile and suitable area for cultivation.<sup>1</sup> Then along with the headman, his allies also acquired the fertile land irrespective of the distance of the sites. Since then, the villagers are cultivating land at all the sites of the village.

Since there is no scarcity of forest land for shifting cultivation all of them clear the forest on the basis of their

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1. See the chapters on and ceremonial friendship, patron-client relationship and class formation in this new tradition of the headman.

labour power. But the poor neglect their own field during the agricultural season and sell their labour power to the well-to-do villagers and jungle-contractors and consequently get less from their fields.

At first let us see how the surplus products help the rich cultivate a larger area incompatible to the labour power of their respective families.

### 5.3 DIFFERENTIATION AMONG THE SHIFTING CULTIVATORS OF BIRINGAPUR

To measure the area of the first and second patch we have taken the quantity of Birhi and Tilā, paddy and Gangei, the predominant crops sown in the first and second patch respectively.

TABLE 5.1: Quantity of seed of Birhi and Tilā sown in the first patch in kgs. in Biringapur

Seed, in Kgs.	No. of households which have sown <u>Birhi</u>	No. of households which have sown <u>Tilā</u>
2	10	11
4	6	12
5	10	3
Total 11	26	26

TABLE 5.2: Quantity of seed. of Paddy and Gangei sown in the second patch in Kgs. in Biringapur.

(a)	<u>Seed in Kgs.</u>	<u>No. of households which have sown Paddy.</u>
	40	18
	100	3
	140	5
		<u>26</u>
(b)	<u>Seed in Kgs.</u>	<u>No. of households which have sown Gangei</u>
	2	4
	4	20
	8	2
		<u>26</u>

Here two households of the village did not cultivate the first and second patch because of their illness. This signifies that the kinship network of the village is not so strong as we find in tribal societies. Though they do not consider the payment in cash or kind strictly so far as they get the meals, they do not help the needy villagers entirely for the agricultural operations.

Only nine out of twenty eight households have cultivated the third patch during the year 1981-82 and all of them have grown the traditional crops Jali and/or Gangei there. Here also five are the "elites" who managed to cultivate this patch because of their surplus products and the nearness of the patch. The rest four households are the migrants from the plains, who were working as farm labourers in their respective native places. Though these migrants do not cultivate the third patch intensively unlike their counter part, they do not neglect the patch like the early settlers of the village Biringapur.

All the "elites," who cultivated the third patch have more draught animals than others. All of them have more than three pair of bullocks or cows with them except the headman who has only a pair of cows. The headman gets whatever he wants during the cultivation and hence manages to finish the agricultural operations in time.

Though the traditional way of cultivation of the third patch does not need ploughing, the villagers plough it if only they can reach to the third patch after the ploughing of the second patch and the garden plots. So the strength of the cows and bullocks of the concerned households also determines the ploughing of the third patch, along with the nearness of the plot.

There are twelve households who do not possess cows or bullocks, four households keep only one cow and hire another one either from the villagers or outsiders and the rest twelve families keep more than a pair of cows. The strength of draught animals are not compatible with the possession of the same required number of ploughs. The possession of more number of cows or bullocks is of a status symbol. The brother of the headman owns five pairs of cows and a pair of bullocks whereas he has only three ploughs and fourteen plough shafts. When I was taking the interview of the above mentioned person, he explained the ownership of the various types of metal implements in a special way in the presence of other villagers to enhance his prestige. The villagers also give respect to this person because of the possession of those costly metal implements. The needy villagers hire the **metal implements** and give a nominal sum either in cash or kind to him. But the villagers rarely hire the ploughshaft or other ordinary metal implements from him. Along with these, he owns twenty one axes and fifteen sickles, whereas there are only four adult members in his family. So the motive of the possession of those implements is not to rent others for profit or for use but mainly an acquisition to enhance one's prestige.

Since the consumption unit does not correspond with the labour unit and the area required for cultivation to feed all the family members, we will measure the consumption unit



and labour unit of each families to show the role of surplus product and consequently the differentiation among the shifting cultivators. Epstein (1967: 160) gives weightage on the basis of the age and sex of the members where as Bailey (1958: 277) considers age as the only criterion to determine the consumption unit like "all persons of fifteen years and over as full consumers, those from ten to fourteen as half consumers, those from two to nine as quarter consumers and ignored those under two years, since the amount of rice they eat is negligible". But in my field, the nature of consumption is entirely different from the field of Epstein and Bailey, who worked in settled agriculture villages. Here there is a acute scarcity of rice, the staple food of the plains. They take roots, tubers, fruits, cereals and rice only after the harvesting and/or purchasing, bringing loan from the money-lenders. The quantity of food taken by a member depends on the capability of his/her to do work. Only in the case of oldmen, women and the children the consumption unit becomes more than the labour unit. The children ask for food several times in a day and the parents also meet their demand either in rice, roots, tubers or fruits and remain busy in their activities. After cooking the wife keeps the share of all the family members in leaf cups or metal pots in the house and goes for work. Since all the family members do not return for their lunch or dinner at the same time and the busy life of them

does not allow the housewife to serve during the meal time, they pick up their respective shares whenever they come for that. The wife distributes the food on the basis of the work done by the concerned member. Those who do hard work get more food than the others. This rule is so deep rooted among the Bhuiyans that none of them violate the rule and dares to grab the share which is not meant for them. In some cases the wife keeps a major share for her, but when the husband discovers that he punishes her severely and the continuation of the unjust distribution sometime lead to divorce also. After verifying the shares distributed in some houses of the village, we have measured the consumption and labour units of the members as follows:

<u>Household members</u>	<u>Consumption unit</u>	<u>Labour unit</u>
Males above 16 years	1.00	1.00
Females above 16 years	0.80	0.80
Males above 12 years but below 16 years.	0.80	0.80
Male and Female child above 8 years but below 12 years	0.40	0.40
Male and Female child above 4 years but below 7 years	0.30	0.20
Old man and woman above 60 years.	0.60	0.20

Here we have given only 0.20 weightage to the oldman and woman equal to the weightage of the children below seven years because, both the above categories only take care of the younger children and watch the houses in the village. Sometimes the oldmen are taken to the field and are given the charge of watching the fields. The children of below seven years are also asked to go to the field in the morning to scare away the birds.

Since the sharing of food is determined by the ability to do work we find a very little difference between the consumption and labour unit of the respective families. But as Epstein cautions about the sex and age composition of the household where less number of adults and more number of children of the families cannot be put under the same category though the labour unit of the both will be same (Epstein, 1967: 161), here also we will take into consideration of that fact to overcome the problem in the analysis. As we have mentioned earlier, the presence of adult men and women is essential in the family to carryout the specific agricultural operations to escape from hiring labour and in some cases where the labour power of the family exceeds the area cultivated, the data from Biringapur gives a clear picture of increasing differentiation. To justify our argument here we will take into consideration of the fact of hiring of labour, possession of necessary implements for the cultivation.

Besides these, as we have said earlier the extra power of the elites in the village we will compare them with the common people on the area cultivated by them.

TABLE 5.3: Seed sown in the swidden on the basis of the family labour/labour unit of the households in Biringapur.

Family labour Labour unit.	No. of house- holds	Seed. sown in Kgs.			
		Birhi	Tila	Paddy	Gangei
25 - 40	12	3.33	2.41	21.25	0.91
41 - 55	6	3	3.58	58.33	1.33
56 - 70	2	2.5	2	27.5	0.75
71 - 85	2	4	5	80	1.5
86 and above	3	4.83	3.16	80	4.5
Total	25 *				
Average		3.44	3	42.4	1.48

\* We have excluded three households as they cultivate the first two patches of swidden land ..

The above table shows that, the residents of Biringapur have maintained relatively the egalitarian set up of the ideal primitive societies as the families having more labour power cultivate a larger area of swiddens. But if we will see the hiring of labour of the households we can see the

importance of surplus among shifting cultivators.

TABLE 5.4: Labour use in the village Biringapur

Family labour unit	No. of house-holds.	Rela- tive labo- ur.	%age of the total labour	Exch- ange lab- our	%age of the total lab- our	Baj Vill. and %	Youth and %	Wage labo- ur	%age
25 - 40	12	40	(15.93)	6	(50.00)	-	-	16	(13)
41 - 55	6	193	(76.89)	6	(50.00)	30 (100)	6 (100)	40	(87)
56 - 70	2	10	( 3.98)	-	-	-	-	-	-
71 - 85	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
86 and above	3	8	( 3.2)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	25	251	(100)	12	(100)	30(100)	6(100)	46	(100)

It can be seen from the above table that, the 41-55 group hires more labour in comparison to other groups. The utilisation of all categories of labour prevalent in the Bhuiyan society by this group of minimum labour power indicates the capacity to spend more than other villagers. Now let us see the cultivated area and the position of these inhabitants individually in the village. The villagers of this group are Mangala Mandal, Sagara Mandal, Lokia Mandal, Banchara Mandal,

Bakhalu Dehuri and Abhi Dehuri. But Mangala Mandal, Sagara Mandal and Abhi Dehuri together hire 70.51 per cent of the total relative labour, 50 per cent of the total exchange labour, 80.43 per cent of the total wage labour and 100 per cent of the both types of Bāj of the village. Mangala Mandal is the brother of the present headman, who holds a special position both socially and economically in the village. He has got more implements and the villagers generally hire from him during the agricultural season. He owns ten heads of cows, two heads of bullocks and seven goats. The villagers bring rice or goat from him as loan whenever they require for the village feasts. He has given 58 kgs. of paddy and 20 kgs. of rice as loan to the villagers. The second person Sagara Mandal is also from the Headman's family and is a witch doctor. He owns three pairs of cows, one pair of bullocks and ten goats. Though he does not give the implements to others like Mangala Mandal, he has got all the required implements. Sagara is the next only money lender in the village and he has given six kgs. of rice to the villagers. The third person Abhi Dehuri is the priest and the witch doctor of the village. He has got six cows, one bullock, ten goats and all the necessary implements for cultivation. Abhi Dehuri is the only literate person in the village. There are two more important persons in Biringapur who do not hire labour at all for the agricultural work. Those are Pata Pradhan, the Headman and Samaru

Behera brother of the ex-headman. Pata Pradhan comes under the 86 and above category with the total labour unit of 5.20 in the family. He remains always in a drunken stage and does not work seriously in the field. But he gets labour without wages from the village whenever he requires either for agricultural or non-agricultural work. Then the second person, Samaru Behera, who comes under 71-85 category with the total labour unit of 4.40 in the family does not hire outside labour. It was reported by him that before this year he used to hire labour, but his present economic condition does not allow him to do so. He is a devotee of 'Sri Krishna Guru' and holds festival in the village and performs puja everyday in his house. The puja requires ghee, scented sticks, coconut or fruits, which become a costly affair for him. The villagers also reported that since his involvement in the 'Sri Krishna Cult' he has become poor and does not give loan and hire labour.

Thus it is evident from the above discussion that the common assumption of the egalitarian distribution of the land with no differentiation among the shifting cultivators is wrong and shows the differentiation among them.

#### 5.4 DISTRIBUTION OF SWIDDEN LAND IN MISHAPUR

The non-availability of more forest areas unlike the Biringapur here the villagers distribute the land equally

among the villagers irrespective of the labour power of the concerned families. There are five sites for shifting cultivation in the village and they cultivate the same patch for three years. The fallow period is four years. Since the membership of a person in the village, either by setting up of a new house by the married couple or by the approved migrants in the village entitled them to have a share of the fields with the constant area and hence lessen the size of the holding and fallow period every year.

After the construction or repair of houses, in the month of January-February, when the villagers are free, they decide a day to distribute the sites for shifting cultivation. The newly married couples, who establish their independent houses apply to the headman for a share of field in that year. On that particular day all the head of the households go to the forest under the leadership of the headman. Two of them hold a rope to measure the horizontal side of the plots. They do not measure the plots on the basis of feet, the standard unit of measurement, but use a rope of 20 or 25 hāat.<sup>2</sup>

The earlier demarcation point which is marked by a stone, slope or the trunk of a cut tree also help them to measure the plots. If there is no increase of households in

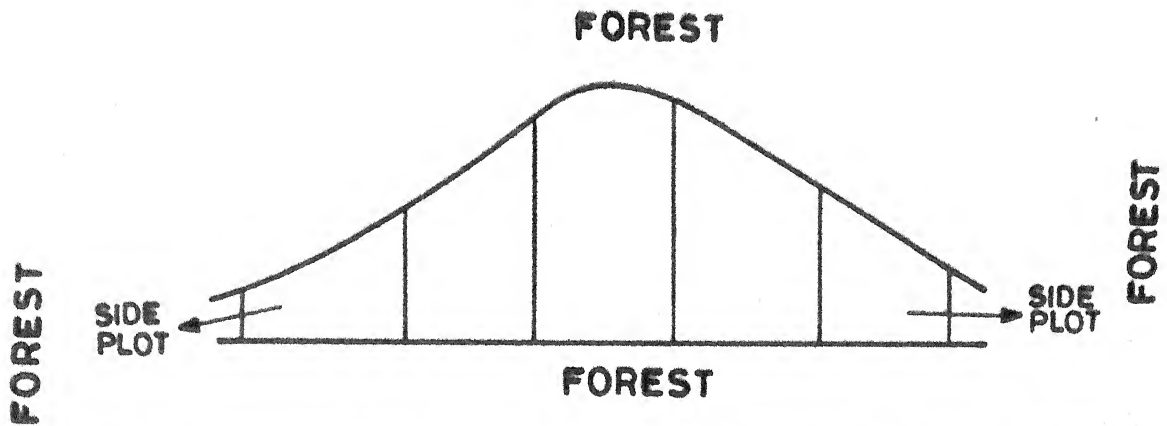
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2. One hāat is approximately one and half feet.

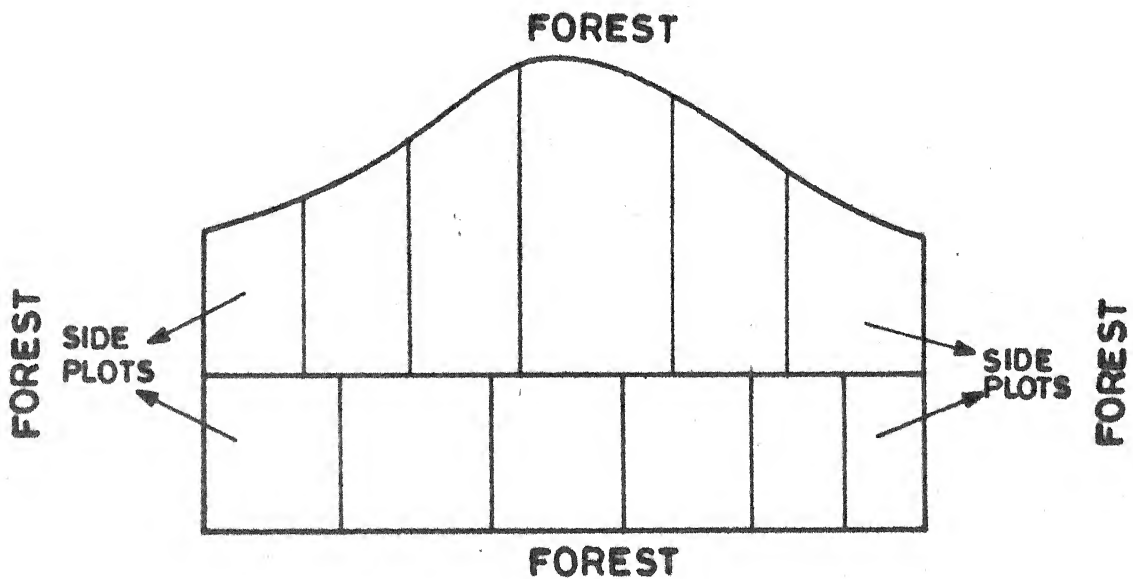


the village they just stick to the earlier dividing mark at the time of distribution. Since all the sites are in the hills, the household owns the entire vertical area within the two dividing horizontal lines of the plot. As we were prevented by the headman to measure all the plots and the measurement of only five plots reveal that each of them own a area of 2,000 to 2,500 sq. feet. But the owner of the two side plots are given more area as those are attacked frequently by the wild animals. The selection of the plots by the respective individuals are made when they proceed from one end to the other. If a man tells to cultivate a particular patch, after the measurement of that, generally others do not oppose him. But so far the possession of the side plots are concerned, generally people are reluctant to take them. It is the custom among Bhuiyans that, there are only two side plots, where the owners are given more areas. But the survey of all the three kamanās shows that more than two people hold the side plots, but they do not get any concession for more areas like the first two persons. The location of the plots can be seen from the maps 5.1 and 5.2.

The location of the plots in the figure 5.1 shows that there are only two side plots. But this was the earlier ways of distribution when there was more forest areas and less people in the village. The figure 5.2 shows the present location of plots, where there are four side plots. Then the



MAP : 5.1 SHIFTING CULTIVATION LAND WITH TWO SIDE PLOTS IN A SITE .



MAP : 5.2 SHIFTING CULTIVATION LAND WITH FOUR SIDE PLOTS IN A SITE .

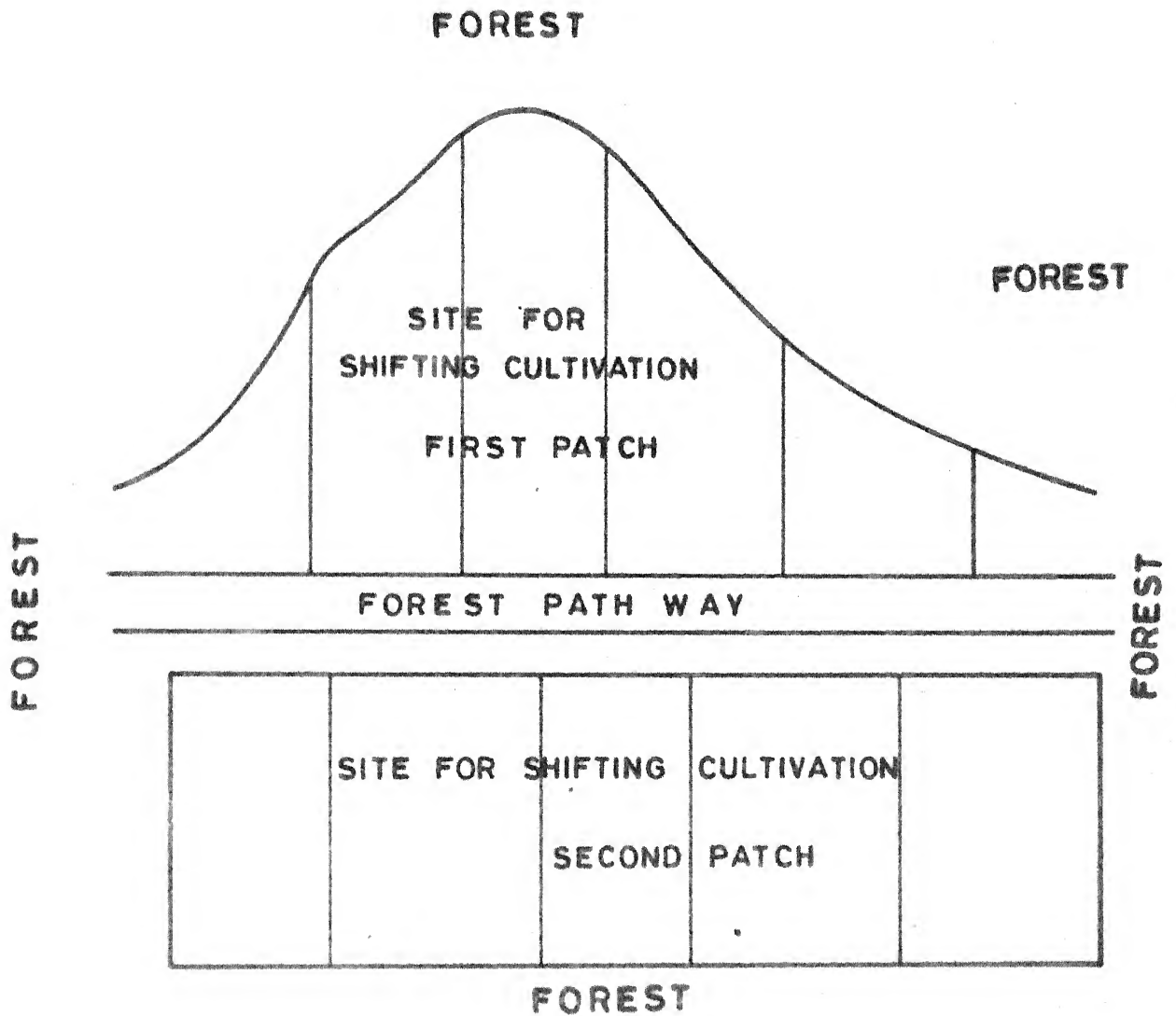
lower side plots are more prone to attack by the wild animals as those are at the foot hills. But the owner of lower side plots are not allowed to have more area like the owner of the upper side plots. The middle patches are generally preferred by the villagers. The widows and oldmen are given plots in the middle of the site. So except the widows and oldmen, normally the headman and other leaders of the village occupy the middle patches. Sriram Pradhan, the Headman has been cultivating the middle patches since the distribution of sites equally in the village. During our field work he was cultivating the middle patches of first and third Kamana and the side patch of the second Kamana. The reason of this exception of the selection of the side patch is explained by the headman as the result of the complaint by the villagers. The total labour unit of the Headman family is 6.20, the second highest in the village. There are three adult males, four adult females and a girl of ten years in his family. So the watching of the field, the main problem of the side patch is easily tackled by his family.

In the first patch Bagha Behera and Lachu Kamal have taken the side plots of the upper area and have got more areas, where as Kala Dehuri and Ajanu Dehuri, owners of the side plots of the lower area have not got larger areas like the first two. In the second patch there are only two side plots and Sriram Pradhan and Jaya Dehuri have cultivated them.

In the third patch again like the first patch there are four side plots, but the owners of upper half, Butu Behera and Diga Behera have got a larger area and Jaya Dehuri and Laxman Pradhan of the lower half have not got more areas. All the four owners of the side plots of the lower half and even the owners of the side plots of the upper half except the headman do not hold any special position in the village. The less labour unit in their respective families also do not justify the labour demanding cultivation of the side plots.

The selection of all the three patches of shifting cultivation is made by the villagers to keep them together or atleast in the possible nearby places for the suitability of watching them. Almost all of them have the second and third patches in one place ( see Map 5.3). They have preferred the second patch just above the third patches.

The distribution of the present second patch shows the negligence of the headman and other leaders as four households do not get plots in the specified area. When they went on measuring and distributing the plots without taking into consideration of the total area and the number of households to get the share, the area became short for four more villagers. Those were Rusi Pradhan, Kala Dehuri, Diga Behera and Sada Thakur. All of them again do not occupy any special position in the village and also comparatively poorer than others.



MAP: 5.3 LOCATION OF THE SECOND AND THIRD PATCHES OF SHIFTING CULTIVATION IN MISHAPUR.

When these people complained for the injustice they were asked to clear the jungle of a distant area where no one owns land. The rocky land and the distance of the plots did not interest them to go there for cultivation.

The distribution of the present third patch was also done on the same principle mentioned above and all of them had got the plots.

Though the size of cultivated area is same except the side plots, the efficient management of the plots in completing various operations in time and sowing the proper quantity of seed present an unequal picture in the village. The labour intensive agricultural operations, the dependence of some villagers on the moneylenders for the seed and the search for alternative employment for wages and for food in forest during the peak hour of cultivation show the differentiation among them.

#### 5.5 DIFFERENTIATION AMONG THE SHIFTING CULTIVATOR OF MISHAPUR

The presence of settled wet cultivation along with the age old practice of shifting cultivation in Mishapur unlike the earlier village demands more labour to finish the agricultural work of the both in time. The intensive cultivation and the better yield of the settled land again encourage the villagers to take proper care of the shifting land. The limited area of the shifting land also help them to watch the

fields properly. The use of family labour for the cultivation of swidden land can be seen from the Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5: The use of family labour in Mishapur

Labour Unit	No. of household	Family labour (Man days)	Average
2	5	344	69
3	19	1865	98
4	7	1106	158
5	7	1537	219
6	2	566	283
Total	40 *	5418	(135.5)

\* Six households are excluded as they do not cultivate the first two patches.

Here, the use of family labour increases with the increase of labour power. The first two groups, having labour units 2 and 3 work less than the average family labour mandays of the village. So, either they hire in labour to complete the cultivation in time or clear less area than the allotted areas for shifting cultivation. The use of labour outside the families can be seen from the Table 5.6 mentioned below.

TABLE 5.6: The use of labour outside the families in Mishapur

Labour unit	Relative labour and %age	Exchange labour and %age	Village labour and %age	Youth labour and %age	Wage labour and %age	Total labour	Average.
2	19 (8.8)	4 (28.58)	-	-	42 (15.5)	65	(13)
3	115 (53.24)	4 (28.58)	21 (100)	43 (72.88)	106 (39.0)	289	(15)
4	12 (5.5)	1 (7.13)	-	-	57 (21.0)	70	(10)
5	22 (10.19)	1 (7.13)	-	9 (15.25)	54 (20.0)	86	(12)
6	48 (22.22)	4 (28.58)	-	7 (11.87)	12 (4.5)	71	(35.5)
Total	216 (100)	14 (100)	21 (100)	59 (100)	271 (100)	581	(14.5)

Whereas the average use of outside labour is between 10-15 mandays in average in the first five groups, in the last group, it is highest (35.5). This group consists of two households - one is the Pradhan and other is a Priest. These two families complete the agricultural operations in time and



are also able to cultivate the entire allotted plots. We have adopted one more way to find out the differentiation among the villagers. As all of them cultivate the plots of equal size, the quantity of seed sown in the field also varies (see Table 5.7).

TABLE 5.7: The quantity of seed sown in the swidden land of Mishapur

Labour Unit	Birhi	Average	Tila	Average	Paddy	Average	Gangei	Average
2	10.5	(2.1)	7	(1.4)	88	(17.6)	3.5	(0.7)
3	43	(2.26)	35	(1.84)	391	(20.57)	15	(0.78)
4	17.5	(2.5)	13.5	(1.92)	145	(20.71)	4.5	(0.64)
5	27.5	(3.92)	15.5	(2.21)	237	(33.85)	5	(0.71)
6	8	(4.0)	7	(3.5)	56	(28.0)	1.5	(0.75)
Total	105.5	(2.62)	78	(1.95)	917	(22.92)	29.5	(0.74)

Again the group with the highest labour power dominates. The Headman and Guru Pradhan, a Priest have extended the area of second patch and cultivated that like the first patch of swidden land. The Headman has hired 71 outside labour, the maximum in the village along with his total 398 mandays

family labour and hence able to finish the operations in time. We have seen that the villagers were busy in weeding in the first patch even upto the flowering of the Birhi plants. The headman had already finished that long before the rest of the other villagers. The headman gets cheap labour also from outside. The labour provided by the young girls and boys is cheaper in comparison to other types of labour. It is customary for either the boys or girls to work for the headman once during the agricultural season. Then he invites his relatives during that time for which he only gives food and liquor to them which is far less expensive than the wage labour. This outside labour hired by the Pradhan are, 48 relative labour, 7 by the youths, 4 exchange labour and only 12 wage labour. So, only the Pradhan in the group of 6 labour unit hires all the outside labour.

The labour use pattern of Biringapur and Mishapur differs to a great extent. The pattern of cultivation determines the use of labour. Intensive cultivation and the interest to complete the agricultural operations in time for a better yield change the labour use pattern (see Table 5.8).

TABLE 5.8: Labour use pattern in Biringapur and Mishapur

Sl. No.	Types of labour	Biringapur		Mishapur	
		Total	Average	Total	Average
1	Family	4109	152	5818	145
2	Relative	241	9.0	216	5.0
3	Youth	6	0.22	59	1.5
4	Village	30	1.0	21	0.5
5	Exchange	12	0.5	14	0.35
6	Wage labour	46	1.7	334	8.35
7	Average labour	4444	164.6	6462	161.5

Here though almost all types of labour including the average labour is equal, the use of wage labour, introduced during the British rule is highest in Mishapur. Then in comparison to the people of Mishapur, in Biringapur forest is cleared on the basis of the labour power of the family and still the labour use is minimum in the former.

#### 5.6 DIFFERENTIATION IN THE OWNERSHIP OF IMPLEMENTS IN BIRINGAPUR AND MISHAPUR

The Bhuiyans use several types of implements both wooden and metal to carry on various activities like hunting, food gathering, cultivation and cutting of bamboo and timber

under the jungle contractors. The names, description and uses of the implements can be seen from the Table 5.9 given below.

TABLE 5.9 : Implements and their uses in Biringapur and Mishapur

Sl. No.	Local name of the implements	English equivalents or description of implements	Uses
1.	Khantā	Small piece of iron with a wooden handle	In digging soil to collect roots and tubers.
2.	Gardani	Half circled iron pointed at the tip.	to tackle difficult corners or ledges where plough does not work.
3.	Kānda	Arrow	for hunting wild animals.
4.	Bitā	Wooden arrow like structure and flat at the tip.	to kill birds.
5.	Dhanu	Bow	for hunting
6.	Budīā	Small axe	for cutting bushes, and branches
7.	Kurādhi	Bigger axe	for cutting trees.
8.	Dā	Sickle	Reaping crops and cutting small bushes
9.	Langala	Plough	Ploughing

contd.....

(TABLE 5.9: contd.)

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10.	Bārisi	Chisel	Carpentary work.
11.	Likhan	Drill	Carpentary work.
12.	Batāli	Drill	for carpentary work.
13.	Germet	Drill	for carpentary work.
14.	Ranjā	Plainer	Carpentary work.
15.	Karata	Saw	for carpentary work.
16.	Kodi	Spade	to dig soil and throw from one place to another.
17.	Sābal	Iron bar sharp and flat at the tip	extract stones and to dig holes.
18.	Gainti	Pick axe	extract stones and dig holes.
19.	Mai	Wooden plainer	to level the soil during cultivation
20.	Gānduā	Basket	to carry materials.
21.	Bhār	Wooden bar	to carry the materials with Gandua.
22.	Suli	Wooden bar, flat and pointed at both ends.	to carry the harvested paddy, jali, gangei etc. to threshing floor.
23.	Balada Gādi	Bullock cart	transportation.

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TABLE 5.10: Ownership pattern of implements in Biringapur and Mishapur

Sl. No.	Local name of the Implements	Biringapur		Mishapur	
		Households owning implements	Percentage	Households owning implements	Percentage
1.	Khantā	28	100	37	80
2.	Gardani	26	92	39	85
3.	Kānda	26	92	21	46
4.	Budiā	28	100	46	100
5.	Kurādhi	20	70	40	87
6.	Dā	28	100	44	96
7.	Langala	18	65	34	74
8.	Bārisi	15	55	22	48
9.	Likhan	12	40	20	44
10.	Batāli	4	15	7	15
11.	Germet	1	5	nil	nil
12.	Ranjā	nil	nil	1	2
13.	Karata	2	7	1	2
14.	Kodi	6	20	22	48
15.	Sābal	4	15	19	41
16.	Gainti	nil	nil	6	13
17.	Mai	5	25	8	17
18.	Balada gādi	nil	nil	1	2

were coming frequently to their native place and were maintaining the link with Mishapur. Then the forest was demarcated by Reserved and Khasra forest and thus the shifting cultivation area became small. In 1952, the entire village of Biringapur was also shifted to Bijadihi, a plains village, situated at a distance of 8 kms. away from the village to stop shifting cultivation. But, there also, the Bhuiyans stay only for 3 years and after that they started returning to their own village. Like the village Sarkarpur, 10 families returned to Biringapur while the rest 12 families stayed back at Bijadihi.

But before this process of shift to settled agriculture by the external agencies, the interest for Bakhudi (kitchen garden) changed the settlement pattern in Biringapur. At first the villagers were staying around the site of Nuandihi. But when the Bakhudis were covered by the shadow of the Panasa (jackfruit) tree, they shifted to other areas of the village. Plants need sunshine for their proper growth but that was hindered by the shadow of the trees on the Bakhudis. Therefore, the interest to make Bakhudis changed the settlement pattern of the village in the year 1962. The knowledge, they had acquired about the settled cultivation in Bijadihi again lured them to capture bigger areas for Bakhudi. But the availability of more forest area around the village for shifting cultivation has not brought the crisis among the Bhuiyans of Biringapur. Even they generally neglect the cultivation of the third patch. 32 per cent of the families

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Biringapur and 82 per cent of the families in Mishapur cultivate the third patch of swidden land. The crisis among the Bhuiyans of Mishapur is more as the villagers distribute the swidden land equally irrespective of the labour power of the families. The continuous use of the swidden land because of the shorter fallow period does not allow for proper regeneration of the forest and consequently the field cannot get a proper burn to reduce the growth of weeds and also ashes, which acts as manure. So, gradually, the Bhuiyans make the suitable third patch as the Guda, the first variety of settled land in the Pauri. Guda land are found in all the villages of Pauri. But along with this type of land other types of land are found in Mishapur. Those are -

(i) Nali:

This is the best one among the settled land. This is prepared on both sides of the stream. Since the stream passes through the land it always keeps the land wet. The rotten leaves and branches brought with the current of streams act as manure. The stone extracted from the land are used to make boundaries around the land to demarcate from other plots, store water when the stream becomes dry and also prevent soil erosion. So the existence of such a land is obviously contingent upon access to a stream.

(ii) Posi:

This is the second best settled land and the best dry land. Here also they erect bunds around the field for the reason mentioned above.

(iii) Guda:

If a plot of land which has been used as third patch of shifting cultivation is considered suitable it is converted into settled land. Such dry settled land is called Guda and is considered inferior to Posi. If Guda is improved gradually by extracting stones it may be considered a Posi.

In Nali and Posi, Bhuiyans of Mishapur grow paddy and in Guda, mustard and til. They take a single crop in a year.

Now if we look at the transition from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture, the following main points emerge:

- (1) The transition requires the availability of improved, more complex and expensive implements.
- (2) It requires new skills and knowledge concerned with improved practices of production.
- (3) In the initial phase, labour requirement increases for preparing land suitable for settled agriculture.

But before these changes are absorbed by a community, certain pressures act upon it.

- (4) There is increasing pressure on land. It is no longer possible to freely extend the land under shifting cultivation.
- (5) When the pressure on land starts building up in the hilly areas, the importance of good quality land, potentially suited to settled agriculture, acquires much greater significance because it is much more scarce than other land.

In order to analyse the response of the community under such circumstances, the already existing social structure of the community has to be understood.

- (6) The existing principle of stratification in the community utilised by the 'elites' to corner the best lands.
- (7) The 'elites' are in a better position to acquire improved implements and organise large labour force required to make the transition to settled agriculture.
- (8) Once the transition is made, greater productivity on improved settled land further increases the differentiation in the community.

This process of evolution from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture and its consequences can be clearly demonstrated in the two villages we have studied.

As noted earlier, the colonial government put restrictions on the use of forest for shifting cultivation by demarcating

the reserved from Khasra forest. After Independence the Indian Government also more or less followed the same policy. The Bhuiyans were forced to shorten the fallow period. It is 8-10 years in Biringapur but only 4 years in Mishapur. . To meet the demand of increasing population they started cultivating the same patch twice and thrice. In Biringapur the forest is cleared on the basis of family labour power whereas in Mishapur the tribals distribute the land equally. Similarly, pressure on land forces intensification of cultivation. This can be seen in our study especially in the case of the Third patch. Whereas 32% of the households cultivate the 3rd patch in Biringapur but the figure rises to 82% in Mishapur. The use of wage labour in Mishapur is far greater than Biringapur.

Regarding differentiation, the Headman and his "allies" select the best patches for shifting cultivation in both the villages. In Mishapur though the village council distributes the land equally, this group selects the middle patches. Middle patches are generally not destroyed by wild animals and when the owners of all side patches watch their fields, the middle patch are also indirectly protected by them. The "elites" get free labour from the villagers during cultivation. The Headman and his "allies" even go to the extent of punishing their opponents with the help of the forest guard and Chatia (lowest official of the police department). In return, these low ranking officials get forest produce, vegetables and labour

freely through the Headman. Once again, the moneylenders give loan to the villagers through the Headman for reasons of security. Because of all these privileges enjoyed by the Headman and his allies, they are able to appropriate the surplus product. This surplus is invested mainly in money lending and purchasing better implements like sabal, gainti and spade etc. and hence in making settled land.

Since, Nali, the best wet land is prepared around a stream, the Headman and his "allies" have prepared this land and also captured other suitable areas for the future. Therefore, the increase in income of this group and the decrease in the income of the common tribals in the village expedites the process of differentiation. By analysing the mechanism of change from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture, we can now conclude that as this process of change gets consolidated requiring more complex and expensive implements and sophisticated alien knowledge and skills, the social structure of the Bhuiyans will get increasingly inegalitarian and consequently the process of depeasantisation may take place.

## CHAPTER VI

### DEPEASANTISATION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In tribal studies, focusing their attention on changes in agrarian structure, the primary aim till recently has been to demonstrate the process of peasantisation. As more and more tribal communities are subjected to external influences like the forces of modernisation, a process of impoverishment and depeasantisation is gradually being observed. Here, without necessarily coupling depeasantisation with capitalist development, we simply define depeasantisation as a process by which a landowner is dispossessed of his land by another.

There are several studies now in India showing the loss of land on the part of the tribals, especially to non-tribal moneylenders, who have made deep inroads into the tribal societies in all parts of India (see, for example Singh, 1972; Fuchs, 1972; Patil, 1974 and Rao, 1983). These studies suggest that land alienation in tribal societies starts primarily after a community has made a transformation from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture.

We have selected the village Chaasapur to show the process of depeasantisation of the tribals. How the colonisation of the non-tribals, initially encouraged by the British to bring more and more land under cultivation to increase the

revenue and also the ban on shifting cultivation to exploit the forest wealth for commercial use changed the landownership pattern in Chaasapur are to be discussed here. Also how the post-Independence era again expedited the change in the same direction, when the non-tribals continued to invade the village in search of cultivable land is to be discussed in this chapter.

Then the village, Sarkarpur, which was established as a resettlement colony, situated at a distance of two kms. from the Chaasapur is considered as a hamlet of the latter. The inhabitants of Chaasapur control the economic, political and religious affair of the village, Sarkarpur. So in this chapter we will discuss the changes in the village, with special reference to the process of depeasantisation to show the consequence of the interaction of shifting cultivators turned-settled agriculturists Pauri Bhuiyans with the Hindu caste people.

In section 6.2, background of depeasantisation of the tribals in India is described. It is followed by a short description of the social structures of Chaasapur and Sarkarpur in section 6.3. Sections 6.4 and 6.5 present the landownership pattern and cultivation of settled land respectively. Pauperisation among the Bhuiyans (6.6) and at last (6.7) land sale in both the villages are described.

## 6.2 BACKGROUND OF DEPEASANTISATION AMONG THE TRIBALS IN INDIA

It is evident from the available historical records that the tribal communities of India were occupying much larger areas than they occupy today. There were several tribal kingdoms also in the central India. But when the Hindu and Muslim "caste" people entered into their areas in search of land "the tribals were deprived either by force of more fertile land or they themselves withdrew to the still unoccupied hills where they could better escape the domination of the recent invaders and keep intact their tribal customs and ways of life" (Fuchs, 1972: 368).

As we have discussed elsewhere (see the chapter 'peasantisation') the ban on shifting cultivation, hunting, imposition of grazing charges, the pressure on forest because of the growth of population of their society and on the other the incentives for settled cultivation like revenue free land, bullocks, implements, seed, etc. force them to become settled agriculturists. But as the shifting cultivator tribals are ignorant about the practice of settled agriculture with comparatively expensive implements, they find difficult to meet both ends with their earnings. Generally, the making of a rice field out of a virgin land is a long process, requiring considerable toil in levelling the land and channelling the water. Levelling the field usually bring sub-soil to the surface and it may take five to six years to bring the right



degree of fertility to the soil. When they stay for a considerable period with settled agriculture and learn the technique of making new rice field, they find the problem of finance for that. The absence of credit facilities in the area forces them to depend on the local non-tribal moneylenders for both the productive and consumption loans. The coming together of the non-accumulating tribals and the accumulating non-tribal Sahukars results in the land alienation of them. Studies from all over India have shown land alienation of the tribals by the moneylenders. From Orissa, Bailey reported from his study on Konds that the occasion for land being put up for sale is usually arising out of contingency (1958). Upadhyay (1980) and Patil (1974) from Maharashtra, Fuchs (1972) and Singh (1972) from central India, Rao (1983) from Andhra Pradesh report the problem of land alienation of the tribals by the moneylenders. Though the Government of India passed laws against the land transfer to the non-tribals, lands continued to change hand either to the rich tribals and the non-tribals under benami transfer. But the land transfer between the tribals "is not so serious a problem as compared to the land transfers from tribal to non-tribal" (Patil, 1974: 33). But there is no legislation to check the alienation of land by the 'advanced' rich tribals (Pathy, 1982).

### 6.3 GENERAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGES

Chaasapur is situated at the foot hills of the Pauri at a distance of 7 kms. from the Panchayat, Kala. It is linked with the tar road, National Highway No. 6, at the village Kala by a kuchha road.<sup>1</sup> A forest stream flows from the Pauri to the North-Eastern side of the village. There are two ponds in the village - one is owned by Kolha Sahu, a Chasa land owner-cum-moneylender, and the other is a communally owned one. The village pond is used for bathing and irrigation only by the landowners of the nearby land whereas the privately owned pond was dug up only for irrigation. There are six wells in the village, out of which one is a village well and the rest are privately owned. But only three wells, owned by Harihar Naik, a Pana, Una Mahanta and Sankarshan Pradhan, the present Gountia of the village, are used for irrigation to the vegetable gardens. The other two owned by Kathi Sahu and Braja Pradhan, the Chasas, are used only for domestic purpose.

At present all the villagers practise settled cultivation or depend on it in some way or other. They grow only one crop

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1. Like all other plains villages, Chaasapur is also a multi caste, multi-tribal one. There are 111 households and the total population is 502 in the village. There are 39 households of Bhuiyans, 12 households of Kolhas, 2 households of Kandha, 26 households of Pana, 16 households of Chasa, 10 households of Gauda and 6 households of Mahantas in the village.

in a year and mainly depend on the rainfall. The crop grown is mainly paddy. They grow cereals in the uplands. During the Rabi season, the land-owners around the ponds and the wells grow vegetables. The owners of the land around the ponds and wells allow some of the relatives and friends to grow vegetables in their fields. They manure the plots, watch the entire fields, help the owners in watering the crops and above all support and help the owners in all respects of life. Except the Mahantas, and Kolha Sahu, others do not sell the vegetables.

In Sarkarpur also the villagers depend on settled agriculture. It is situated at the foot hills and comprised of 26 households. The total population of the village is 93. Except one Kamara family the rest are tribals - 22 families of Bhuiyan tribe and 3 families of Sabara tribe. Here, the tribals except one family depend mainly on wages for their livelihood. Most of them work as labourers in the village, Chaasapur. They do not get a proper yield from their lands because the lands are not fertile and also there is no irrigation facility to water their fields. Though there is a village owned pond and a well, they do not use these to irrigate their fields. They grow only paddy in their fields in the rainy season. In the Rabi season, they do not grow anything.

#### 6.4 LAND OWNERSHIP

##### (a) Types of Settled Land:

Like other plains villages of the district, here also the villagers of Chaasapur cultivate four categories of land.

##### (i) Bahal Land:

This is a low lying land and the best variety of land available in the area. Generally a stream passes through or above the land. The soil contains the moisture throughout the cropping season. Here the paddy of longer duration is generally grown. Since the yield is more than the other categories of land, the owner gives more attention to this type of land. Cowdung and ashes, the only manures used by the villagers are put in this land. The land is ploughed atleast three times before sowing or transplantation. Only the non-tribals transplant the crop and the Bhuiyans only sow the seed in this type of land.

This Bahal land is like the Nali land of Biringapur and Mishapur.

##### (ii) Berna Land:

This is the second best land where the natural availability of water is less than the Bahal land. If it is located near the stream or pond and can be dug up to bring below the water level then it can also become a Bahal land. Here

because of the problem of the availability of water, paddy of smaller duration are grown. Generally all the villagers sow the seed here. The manuring of Berna land depends on the availability of manures and also on the area of Bahal land. It is also ploughed three times before sowing the seeds, but again this depends on the strength of the owner.

Berna land is like the Posi land of Biringapur and Mishapur.

(iii) Māl Land:

This is the upland. Unlike the earlier two types of land, here the owners generally do not erect bunds around the field. But just to demarcate and also to some extent to keep water in the field, the rich land-owners erect a small bund around that. Here the crops of smaller duration than the Berna land and til, moong etc. are grown.

This can also be a Berna land if it can be dug up and bunds can be erected around the field.

This is like the Guda land of the villages, Biringapur and Mishapur.

(iv) Guda Land:

This is the garden land situated either near the house or at a distant place. Here vegetables and cereals are grown. This land gets more attention in ploughing, manuring and

watching in comparison to all the earlier lands discussed above. The cultivation of Guda land depends mainly on the availability of water.

The ownership of these various types of land in Chaasapur can be seen from the Table 6.1.

Among all three lands. Bahal land gives better yield. These are mainly owned by the Chasas, they owned 86.60 per cent of the Bahal land of the village. Since no more area is available to prepare this type of land, all the earlier suitable areas are made cultivable land like the Nali land of Mishapur (see chapter V). The latter migrants and the Bhuiyans do not own Bahal land. Like-wise, the ownership of all other varieties of land is also higher among the Chasas.

The Mahantas who came to the village with the compensation money, when they were evacuated from the Rourkela Steel Plant area, are the second highest owners of settled lands in the village. Kandhas, being only two families and had only one son per family since their arrival, are able to keep their lands intact. Besides these three caste groups, others own far less land than the average per households land of the village.

#### (b) Land Ownership:

The village Chaasapur was established in 1891 by two Bhuiyan families of Keonjhar state, when they fled from their

TABLE 6.1: Caste/Tribe-wise land distribution in Chaasapur (1982 land record)

Sl. No.	Name of the caste/tribe	No. of households	%age	%age of Bahal land	%age of Berna land	%age of Mal land	%age of Guda land	Total	%age	Average per household
1.	Bhuiyan	39	28.7	4.14	4.29	11.27	19.14	21.62	7.90	0.55
2.	Kolha	12	8.8	-	1.40	5.81	-	5.77	2.11	0.48
3.	Kandha	2	1.5	-	1.83	8.90	1.20	8.84	3.23	4.42
4.	Kishan*	4	3.0	8.36	1.98	1.73	-	6.68	2.45	1.67
5.	Pana	26	19.1	-	12.23	8.46	7.01	25.01	9.14	0.96
6.	Chasa	37	27.2	86.60	63.86	58.78	68.05	180.53	65.97	4.88
7.	Gauda	10	7.3	0.90	3.17	3.73	3.43	8.37	3.05	0.83
8.	Mahanta	6	4.4	-	11.24	1.36	1.14	16.85	6.15	2.8
Total		136	100	100	100	100	100	273.67	100	2.01
Bahal		33.57	12.7%							
Berna		138.31	50.4%							
Mal		65.45	24.1%							
Guda		35.84	13.1%							
Total		273.67								

\* 4 Kishan families of a nearby village have got land in Chaasapur.

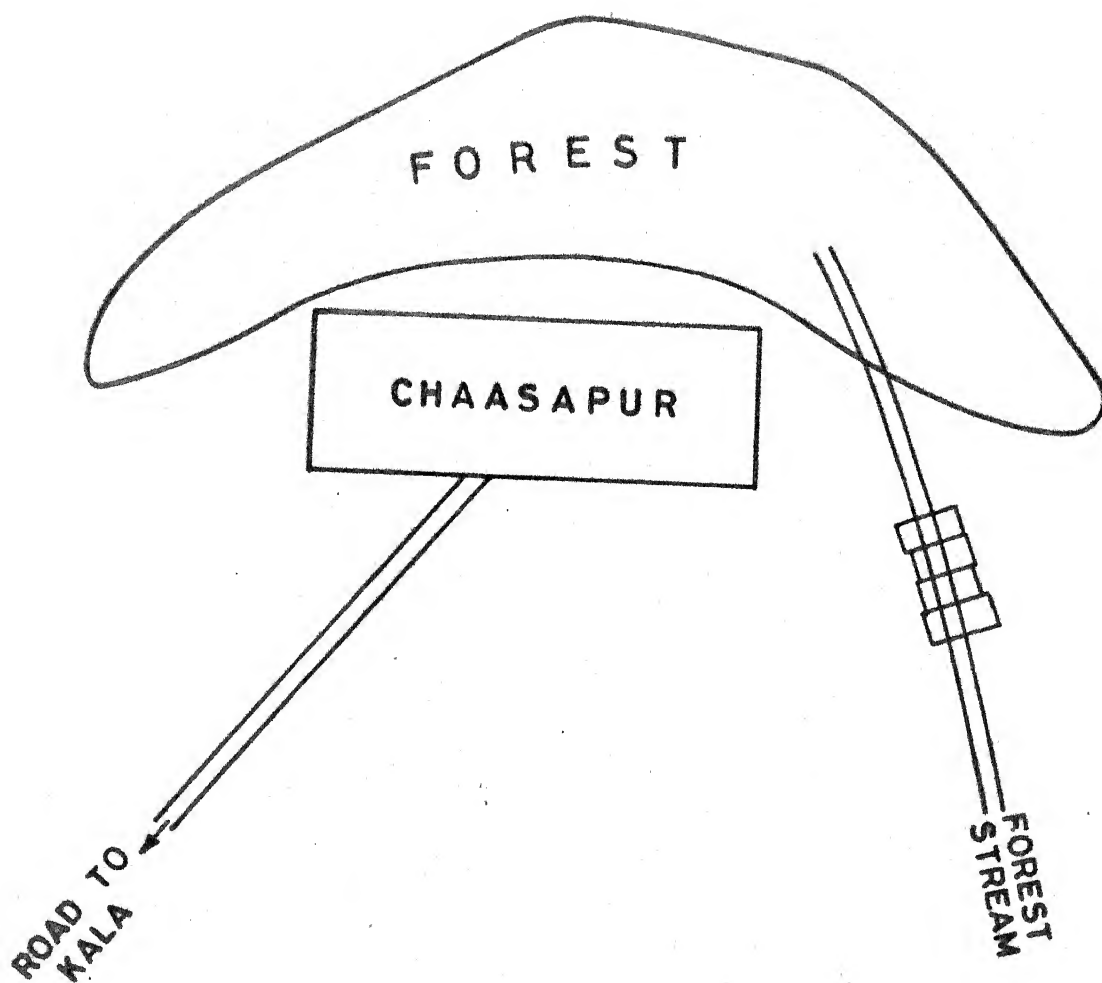
native place after the failure of Bhuiyan rebellion of 1891. Then, three more Bhuiyan families, staying at a nearby place of the village, joined with them and settled down at the present site of the village. All of them were practising shifting cultivation in the Pauri. Alongwith the shifting cultivation, all the five early settler families had prepared small settled lands around the forest stream. The land use pattern can be seen from the map 6.1.

The village Sarkarpur was established in 1952 and its landownership pattern will be clear as we trace the developments historically.

(i) Land use Pattern during 1898-1909:

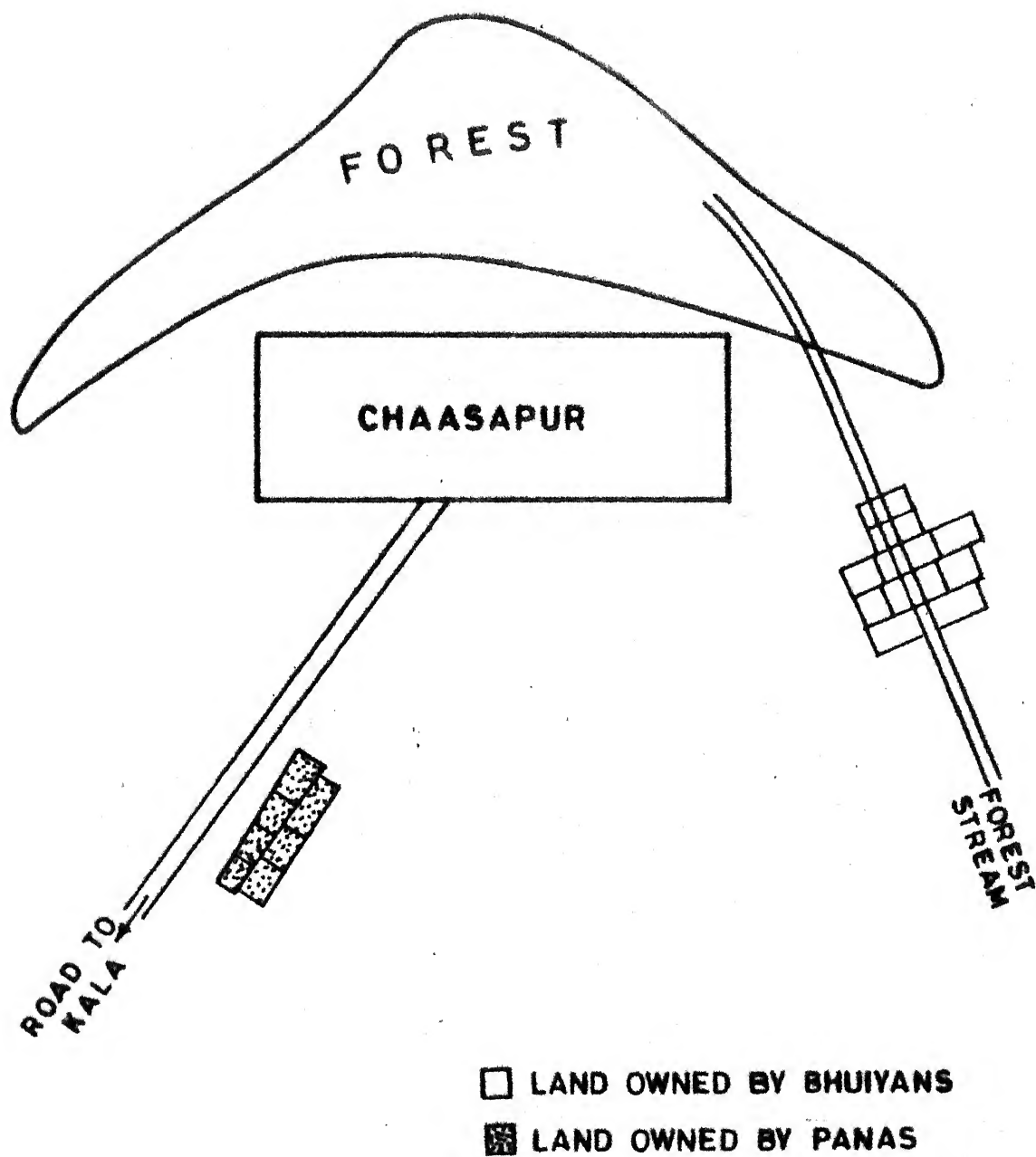
In 1898, the Bhuiyan Headman of the village brought one Pāna family from the plains to work as the Chātiā (chowkidar) of the village. As that Pāna family was practising settled cultivation in their native place, the Bhuiyan Headman allowed him to make settled lands. The arrival of the first family from plains to the village Chaasapur increased the land use area of the village. Bhuiyans treat Pānas as untouchable like the Hindu caste people. So the Pānas set up their hamlet at a distance from the hamlet of Bhuiyans. The settled lands, hence, were prepared near their hamlet and also around the stream. The sites, where settled lands were prepared by the Pānas can be seen from the map 6.2.





LAND OWNED BY BHUIYANS

MAP: 6.1 LAND USE PATTERN IN CHAASAPUR  
DURING THE YEARS 1891 - 1897.



**MAP : 6.2 LAND USE PATTERN IN CHAASAPUR DURING THE YEARS 1898 - 1909 .**

Here the lands are prepared near the stream and water is channelised unlike the lands of Bhuiyans, where the stream passes through the land. Then whereas the Bhuiyans had made settled lands just at the foot hills near their Kamānas, Pānas had prepared lands near their hamlet and around the road, which leads to Kala. The Pānas had preferred the road side area for making settled lands as the continuous flow of human beings on the road lessen the attack of wild animals on the standing crops.

(ii) Land use Pattern during 1910-1953:

The arrival of Suna Pradhan, a Chasa from the plains to the village Chaasapur in 1910 changed the land use pattern and also the socio-economic and political structure of the village. Though Kartika Pradhan, the then Bhuiyan headman was paying the tribute to the king regularly, the year Suna Pradhan came to the village the headmanship was snatched away from the Bhuiyans. At that time the king was encouraging the Gountias to bring more and more land under cultivation with incentives like revenue free cultivation for five years, bullocks, seed , implements. Then as the Bhuiyans were not ready to give up shifting cultivation, the king found the Chasa Gountia a suitable administrator for materializing his plan. Accordingly, Suna Pradhan invited the plains people to settledown in the village. Since Suna Pradhan was from a

Gountia family of the plains he was enjoying the service of Gauda, and other fellow caste people during the day to day household activities. So after the Panas and Chasas, the next caste people to come to the village were Gaudas and other Chasas.

All the non-tribal who had come to the village Chaasapur decided to make settled lands. So with their past experience of making settled lands, they captured all the suitable areas for that. Then as the Gountia was the owner of all the lands of the village, he captured the most fertile, lowlying areas around the stream for his Bhogra land.

A pond was dug up by the Gountia with the Bethi labour of the villagers. Once the pond was prepared, the land around the pond became the best land because of the moisture of the soil and irrigation facility. So Suna Pradhan made settled land at the lower-side of the pond.

Shifting cultivation was stopped in 1952 by the Government. Though the incentives for settled cultivation were continuing since 1946 with the restriction on shifting cultivation, the Bhuiyans of Chaasapur were continuing the practice of shifting cultivation. But once shifting cultivation was stopped, Bhuiyans had to start settled cultivation. They prepared land near their hamlet i.e., at the foot hills and the upper side of the village pond. The upper side of the

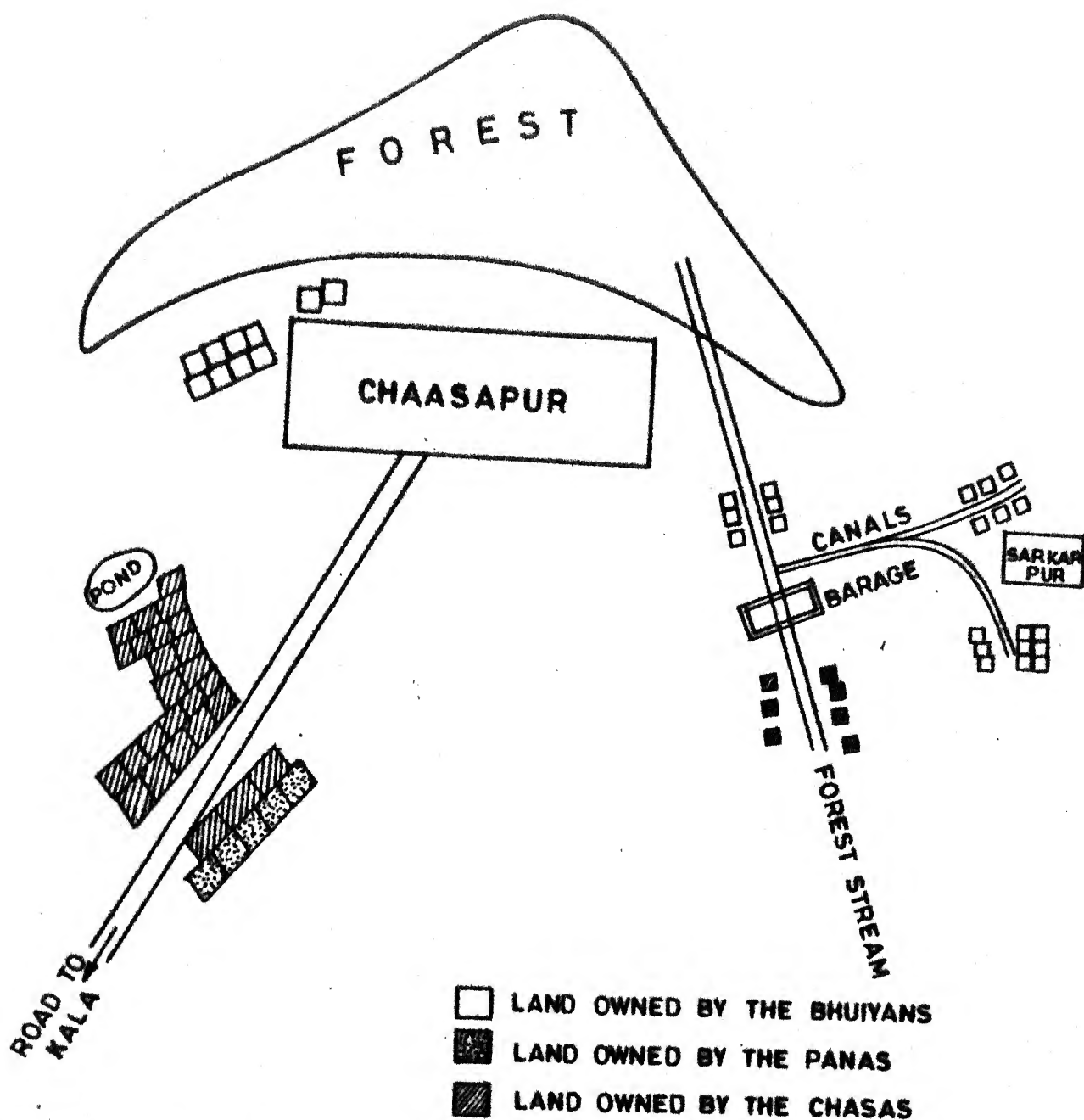
pond is the upland area and hence the non-tribals had not made land there.

So, the land use pattern of the village Chaasapur at the end of this period looked like the following: the non-tribals had land around the stream, lower side of the village pond and around the road to Kala and Bhuiyans at the upland areas of the village ( see map 6.3).

The village Sarkarpur was established in the year 1952. To ensure the permanent staying of the tribals, the Government provided irrigation facility to the villagers. A barrage was constructed in the forest stream in the year 1953. Then canals to the newly prepared settled lands were also prepared for irrigation. So the land use pattern in Sarkarpur was not scattered like the Chaasapur, but was more concentrated and dependent on the location of the canals.

(iii) Land use Pattern during 1954-1982:

The growth of population of the village Chaasapur forced the people to bring more and more waste land under cultivation. But as all the suitable and fertile areas were already occupied, the uplands and rocky land at the foot hills were converted into settled land. As the process of making settled land is quite an expensive one, only the "rich" were able to do this.



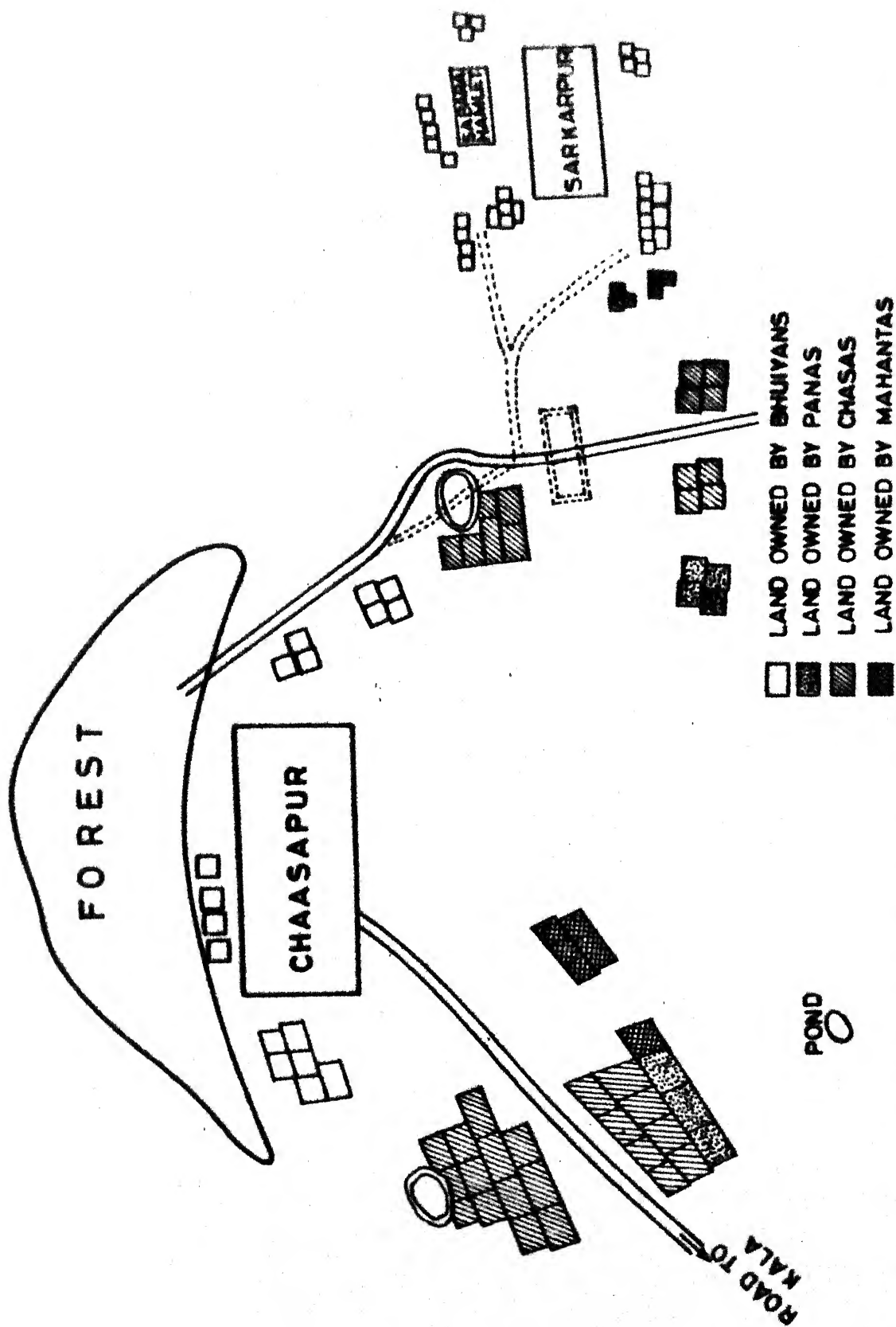
MAP: 6.3 LAND USE PATTERN IN CHAASAPUR AND SARKARPUR DURING THE YEARS 1910-1953.

In the meantime, one privately owned pond and three wells came up in the village Chaasapur. The pond is owned by Kolha Sahu, one of the landowners-cum-moneylenders of the village. He changed the course of the stream and made the pond around a deep and watery area near his lands. Then he prepared and extend settled lands around the pond (see map 6.4).

Then three wells owned by Una Mahanta, Harihar Naik and Sankarshan Pradhan came up during this time. The first one is a Mahanta, second one is a Pana, descendent of the Chatia family and the last one is the present Gountia of the village. Una Mahanta grows vegetables throughout the year in his garden and gets water from the well. Harihar Naik and Shankarshan Pradhan grow vegetables only during the Rabi season and do not sell the vegetables like the Mahanta.

So during this period new land came up only around the wells and ponds by the non-tribals and in the upland areas by the tribals. The non-tribals also levelled and dug their lands to ensure the moisture in the lands.

The barrage constructed in 1953 to provide irrigation facility to the villagers of Sarkarpur, was washed away by flood in 1959. After that, they applied several times to the Government officials of the Block at Barkote, but none of them took care of their request. They constructed a small barrage of



MAP: 6.4 LAND USE PATTERN IN CHAASAPUR AND SARKARPUR IN THE YEAR, 1982.



their own in 1962, but again that was washed away by the flood. In the meantime the flow of water and the course of the stream was diversified by Kolha Sahu. Non-tribals lower the level of the nearby lands to pull water. So, once the irrigation facility was taken away, some villagers left the village and went to the Pauri for shifting cultivation. The rest, who stayed in the village cultivated the lands. They also extended the existing lands and prepared new lands around the village. So, the consolidated picture of the location of settled land, which was dependent on the location of the canals has now become scattered. The village Sarkarpur which was settled in a planned manner on both sides of the village street, has split into two hamlets. The Bhuiyans are staying at the earlier site, whereas the Sabaras took away the building materials and have settled at a distance of half kilometer from the village. When the village has become dispersed, the land use pattern has also become dispersed as the people have the tendency to keep the lands around their houses. The protection of the crop from wild animals again force them to have land near their houses.

The land ownership and also the land use pattern again changed from the earlier one, as the evacuated people from the Rengali Dam project have occupied waste lands of the villagers. Then the Chasa moneylenders of the village Chaasapur are also purchasing lands, which we will discuss in detail

latter on in section 6.7.

So, one can see from those maps and above discussions, the increasing land use pattern in the village Chaasapur. At first when the Bhuiyans were practising shifting cultivation they had prepared settled lands like the Bhuiyans of the villages Biringapur and Mishapur. The technique of making settled land around the stream and channelising the water from the stream was first used by the Panas. Here the crops are not washed away by the flood unlike the earlier prepared lands of the Bhuiyans. Then the arrival of Chasas and other caste people enhanced the process of making settled lands, initiated by the Panas. The technique of making rice field out of the virgin waste land is a long process, which requires considerable toil in levelling the land, channelising the water and erecting bunds around the field to keep water. This technique was unknown to the Bhuiyans and when they acquired the knowledge from the plains caste people all the suitable, fertile areas were acquired by the migrant non-tribals. Then the capital, required to convert the upland to a cultivable settled land is also not with the Bhuiyans. So, they have to satisfy with the rest available upland for their livelihood.

#### (c) Land Settlements:

When the Bhuiyans were practising shifting cultivation, they were paying only tribute to the king in terms of kind

like pulses, vegetables, hunted wild animals, goats etc. to the king. But after the arrival of the Panas, settled lands were cultivated and revenue in cash was given to the king at Barkote, the then tahsil of the Bamra state. The revenue was collected by Kartika Pradhan, the then Bhuiyan headman of the village. It was not known about the amount deposited as revenue or the total area of settled land cultivated at that time. The first land record of the village was prepared in the year 1927 during the headmanship of Karunakar Deb. When Lalu Pradhan was the Gountia, the land revenue was Collected without the settlement. The 1927 land record continued upto the year 1952. In the meantime the newly prepared lands were brought under record by the Nayabadi settlement, done in the year 1945 (Sambalpur District Gazetteers, 1971: 363). After Independence the process of bringing newly prepared land under record by the Revenue Inspector upto 1952 was ineffective. Though Bamra state merged with Orissa on January 1, 1948, the office of Gountia was abolished on May 1, 1965. The Gountia and Chatia were not giving the revenue of their Bhogra and Jagir land upto the year 1965. When all the village offices were abolished, the rent free land enjoyed by the officials were recorded and added to the 1952 land record. This land record continued upto the year 1981 alongwith the newly prepared lands in the village recorded every year by the Revenue Inspector under the heading, Nayabadi land. The

1952 - 1981 land record shows two categories of land - Royati and Nayabadi. Royati land is that one, over which a person has the permanent and heritable right and the other one is the newly prepared land of a person. The caste wise land distribution of the 1952-81 land record is given in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2: Caste/Tribe-wise distribution of land in Chaasapur during 1952 - 1981.

Caste	Royati land	%age	Nayabadi land	%age	Total	%age
1. Bhuiyan	29.73	13.6	0.22	0.6	29.95	11.9
2. Kolha	1.92	0.9	3.70	10.9	5.62	2.25
3. Pana	27.20	12.5	1.40	4.0	28.95	11.49
4. Chasa	135.08	62.0	26.15	77.0	161.23	64.0
5. Mahanta	14.04	6.4	2.20	6.5	16.62	6.6
6. Kishan & others	6.95	3.3	-	-	6.95	2.76
Total	217.84	100	34.01	100 <sup>#</sup>	251.85	100

The area of Nayabadi land is highest among the Chasas. They know the technique and also have got the surplus to make settled lands. Then they also record the land to get

rid of the future litigation.

The next settlement was done in the year 1982. The land are classified into four categories. The ownership of various type of land can be seen from the Table 6.1.

## 6.5 CULTIVATION OF SETTLED LAND

### (a) Technique of Cultivation:

The cultivation of settled land is different from the cultivation of swidden land. It needs constant care and attention varies with the type of land and also the type of crop grown in the field. During the Kharif season, if the rainfall is good, then the villagers take care to store the required amount of water in the fields. But if the rainfall is not sufficient, except the Bahal land, they irrigate the fields from the nearby water source.

During the Rabi season, when only vegetables, sugar cane, wheat are grown around the wells and ponds, there is the need for irrigation. One mode of irrigation is Tendā-party, where water is drawn from the pond or well. Here one person lifts the water with the help of a tin attached with a long bamboo. The bamboo is again fixed with a log, heavier at the bottom on the other side, which acts like a lever. When the person forces the tin to fill-in the water, he applies force, but when the water filled-tin is drawn, the heavier log on the

other side pulls that. The person pours the water on the bank, which is channelised to the field. Simultaneously, one more person waters the field properly.

Along with this technique of irrigation, water is also carried in drums by the bullock cart to the fields. But this is very rare as it involves two persons and also a bullock cart. Only three Chasas, namely Kolha Sahu, Natabara Pradhan and Kathi Sahu adopt this technique of irrigation.

In Sarkarpur, the tribals do not grow vegetables or other cash crops. The villagers depend entirely on rainfall during the Kharif season.

The implements used in cultivation are plough, mai (leveller) and spade. Plough and mai are drawn by the bullocks and buffaloes. Only the Chasas have kept buffaloes. Since the more the plough shaft penetrates inside the soil, the more it brings new soil to the surface, which ultimately helps for the proper growth of the plants. Buffaloes are generally more powerful than the bullocks. Bhuiyans do not use cows in ploughing.

Chasas and Mahantas adopt both the methods of sowing and transplantation in cultivation. Transplantation is generally adopted only in Bahal and some Berna land . As it needs proper ploughing of the field and also costlier than sowing others do not adopt this method. Except the Bhuiyans

other people of the village use cowdung and ashes as manure. The use of chemical fertilizer is rare in the village. Weeding of the paddy fields depends on the economic condition of the villagers. Since the village is at the foot hills, wild animals attack the fields. In the night, they watch the crops. Threshing of the paddy is done with the help of bullocks and cows. These animals are tied and one person takes them around the threshing ground on the harvested paddy crops. This continues for the whole night. Then in the morning straw and the grains are separated. All the above techniques of cultivation are prevalent among the Bhuiyans of the village and also the tribals of Sarkarpur.

(b) Types of Labour:

The need to finish the various agricultural operations in time, villagers hire in labour. The large landowners manage the cultivation with the help of the labourers. The landless or the poor peasants hire out their labour to the non-tribals of the village. Among the Bhuiyans of Chaasapur exchange labour, wage labour, relative labour are found and other forms of labour can be divided into the following four types.

(i) Halia (Farm Labourer):

Here the labourers works ten months in a year. The contract is made for a year and if both the parties are willing to continue the relationship, the contract is renewed again

in the month of Baishakh (May). The contract is made for ten months from the month of Baishakh (May) to Magh (February). The rest two months the Halias remain free to repair their houses, visiting their friends, and relatives. If the master needs the labour of the Halia during these two months, he gives daily wages to him.

On an average the Halia gets three Khandis of paddy called as Padi per month and three Pudugs of paddy called as Bartan after the contract period. Besides these he gets a pair of Dhoti and one cotton shawl. Also, he either gets Sakāl Khiā (breakfast) throughout the year or 15 kgs. of paddy more every month. The contract is generally not terminated in the middle of the year unless the Halia does not perform the required job efficiently or quarrels with the master.

The family members of the Halia also give priority to the master in hiring out their labour during the peak period of cultivation. The female members of the Halia household work for the master during various ceremonies. The Halia gets Dal or Curry frequently from the master when he comes home after his work for his lunch. During the ploughing, plantation, harvesting and threshing, when the work load is more, the master offers lunch or dinner to the Halias at the working place. This saves time for the master as the Halias do not come home to take their food.



(ii) Khanjāmuliā or Belkiā (Half day Labourer):

Several of them have craft skills and/or land of their own. They are economically better off than the Halias. Usually he does not work for the other half of the day. Only during peak seasons he may be asked to work full day for which he gets separate wage.

Here the labourer works only for a half day during the contract period. The contract is made like the Halias. He is allowed to work for others only when the master does not need his labour. The arrangement of this type of labourer is made to ensure the availability of labour during the peak time of cultivation.

He gets 4 kgs. of paddy everyday and after the contract gets a nominal amount called Bartan. The Bartan varies from 2 to 8 Khandis. The amount of Bartan depends on the experience and expertise in making agricultural implements.

(iii) Kuthiā (Labour):

Young boys of 10-15 years of age group are preferred for this type of labour. The employer provides all daily use materials like oil, soap etc. and food throughout the year and at the end of the year gives Bartan, which varies from 4 to 8 Khandis of paddy. He stays in the house of the master also. He is assigned the work of cowherd or shephard by the

employer. Here, unlike the Halias and Khanjamulias, the labourer works throughout the year. Here the change of masters is less than the earlier ones.

(iv) Bhutiār (Daily wage labourer):

The Bhutiār gets 4 kgs. of paddy after a day's work along with the Sakāl Khiā and Belā Khiā. He is free to change his master.

In Chaasanur, seven families, six of which are chasas (the other being a Gauda, who hires a Kolha as a Halia), hire the labour of others for agriculture. The heads of these families are:

- (1) Kathi Sahu
- (2) Kolha Sahu
- (3) Natabara Pradhan
- (4) Purna Sahu
- (5) Jayadev Pradhan
- (6) Sankarshan Pradhan

Among all the above six persons, Kathi Sahu and Kolha Sahu are the leading moneylenders, Natabara Pradhan is the son of the first chasa Gountia and also a moneylender, Purna Sahu is the only son and a small time moneylender, Jayadev Pradhan is from the first chasa Gountia family and Sankarshan Pradhan is the last Gountia of the village. These

The possession of more land in comparison to others and also the higher status of them in the village in the caste hierarchy, they hire the various type of labourers. Except the chasas and Mahantas, all the other caste and tribe groups hire out the labour to the landlords of the village. The labourers come from both the villages Chaasapur and Sarkarpur (see Table 6.4).

TABLE 6.4 : Caste/Tribe and villages of the labourers in Chaasapur

Type of labour	Bhuiyan		Kolha		Pana		Gauda		Total	
	CP	SP	CP	SP	CP	SP	CP	SP	CP	SP
Halia	12	4	3				1		16	4
Khanjamulia	6				4				10	
Kuthia	3	2							3	2
Total	21	6	3		4		1		29	6

CP - Chaasapur  
SP - Sarkarpur

75% of Halias, 60% of Khanjamulias and 100% of Kuthias are Bhuiyans. Panas prefer to work as Khanjamulias as the demand for labour by the employer is not throughout the year.

Along with the cultivation of their own land, they sell carved Khatapuā (legs of the cot) of teak wood and other agricultural wooden implements throughout the year in the Kala weekly market and the nearby areas of the village. They also supply fire wood to the nearby villages with a small bribe to the forest guards they get free wood from the forest.

Kolhas generally work as contract labourers to prepare new settled lands around the village Chaasapur. They prefer not to bind themselves with a particular employer by working as Halias or Khanjāmuliās. They work at the rate of Rs.5 per cubic meter of digging the soil. One adult male can earn between Rs. 20 - 25 in a day. So the Kolhas work in team and earn much higher than the labourers of the village. But they do not get work throughout the year in the village and have to move to different villages in search of that type of job.

We have collected the earlier occupations of all the households of Chaasapur. It is found that, the Bhuiyans have started working as Halias and Khanjāmuliās from the year 1958. When the Chasas came to the village they brought two families of Gauda to work as farm labourers. When the shifting cultivation was stopped in 1952 they continued to depend on the forest produce and were cultivating the settled land with the incentives given by the Government. They were not recruited

as farm labourers by the Chasas immediately after the practise of shifting cultivation was stopped. The first Bhuiyan Halia of Chaasapur was from the plains. He had come to Chaasapur after his marriage with a Bhuiyan girl. Then gradually from the same year, 1958, other needy Bhuiyans also started working as labourers under the Chasa landowners because of the total ban on shifting cultivation, exhaustion of edible roots and tubers in nearby areas of Pauri. Though Bhuiyans were taking loan to pay the revenue most of the times, they were not working as labourers to repay them. Gradually when the Chasas occupied the best lands exercising their power as Gountias and also their expertise in making settled land put them in a comfortable position. On the other hand the lack of idea on settled cultivation and restriction on the use of forest products place the Bhuiyans in a precarious position. Then the location of the settled lands of the Bhuiyans at the foot hills, are attacked frequently by the wild animals. The loss of crop is a regular phenomenon for the Bhuiyans because of their total dependence on rainfall and destruction of crops by the wild animals. As a result of the loss of crop, the only source of income for their sustenance they depend on the loan for both consumption and land revenue. The expensive festivals and ceremonies again force them to depend on the money lenders.

## 6.6 PAUPERISATION: PRELUDE TO LAND ALIENATION

Pauperisation is a process by which the landowners become impoverished and with their uneconomic landholdings depend on others for their livelihood. It is found in the undeveloped areas, where the impoverished landowners stick to their small holdings because of the non-availability of the alternative better earning employment opportunities. The arrival of 'developed' Chasas in Chaasapur created the conditions for the process of pauperisation. We will discuss this through moneylending, share-cropping and other various factors to weaken the cultivation of the Bhuiyans.

### (a) Money lending:

Lalu Pradhan, the first Chasa Gountia was the first moneylender of the village. After his death, his son Natabara Pradhan is still continuing with that business. Then Kathi Sahu and Kolha Sahu have also started this business since 1956 in a large scale. The defaulters pay in terms of landed property and in the absence of land they pay in terms of labour. But only the interest is collected every year. If the loanee owns better variety of land, then only the moneylenders ask him to mortgage the land. The moneylenders generally demand labour from the defaulter Bhuiyans as their land are of inferior variety. Then the absence of commercialisation of agriculture again do not interest the moneylenders to

capture the land of the Bhuiyans. When the Bhuiyans are left with their small uneconomic holding and without the requisite agricultural implements they neither leave the land nor keep themselves away from the moneylenders. This ensure the cheap labour to the landowners-cum-moneylenders. The non-availability of alternative employment opportunities again force them to stay in the village.

So, the Bhuiyans work as labourers both for the consumption need and the repayment of loan. One who works for the debt, brings the Padi regularly every month but uses his Bartan to repay the loan. Since the Padi cannot meet consumption need of the family during the contract period, he brings loan and consequently the amount of loan either remain constant after forgoing the Bartan or increases at the end of the yearly contract. It is seen that, the loanee cannot repay the loan during his life time. So burden of the loan falls on the shoulder of his son. Thus it continues for generation and generation.

It is seen that, except two Bhuiyan families, whose forefather was the Gountia, all the living male family members have worked as Halias, either for the repayment of loan or for the consumption need. Male members of 12 households have worked as Halia for 1-8 years for the moneylenders. The moneylenders have got 39 years of service from those 12 families.

The labour obtained by the moneylenders is given below:

- |    |                  |               |
|----|------------------|---------------|
| 1. | Kolha Sahu       | 19 man years. |
| 2. | Kethi Sahu       | 9 man years   |
| 3. | Purna Sahu       | 3 man years   |
| 4. | Natabara Pradhan | 8 man years   |

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Total 39 man years.

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Besides this, members of 11 households have again worked for 70 man-years in total in the range of 1-12 years for the landowners for only consumption need.<sup>2</sup>

Pana, another caste group, supplies labour for only consumption need. There is only one Pana, who had worked as Halia for a year under Kolha Sahu for the repayment of the loan. There are 10 families of Pana, who have supplied labour for 55 man-years as Halias and 13 man-years as Khanjāmuliās. They have also opted the non-villager landowners for 4 years and worked as Halias.

As we have seen in the previous discussion, usury is one of the main reason which forces the Bhuiyans to hire out labour either to the moneylenders or other landowners for their subsistence. But along with the Bhuiyans, other tribals and

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2. This figure is calculated on the basis of the past occupations of all the households. The questions like under whom he had/has been working as labourers and the reasons of working as labourers are asked to get this data.



caste people also take loan from the moneylenders. Here also, though the consumption loan is predominant. They take loan for preparation, purchase of settled land and agricultural implements. The tribe-caste wise distribution of loan can be seen in Table 6.5.

TABLE 6.5: The tribe/caste wise distribution of loan in Chaasapur

Name of the caste/tribe	Paddy (in pudugs)	Per house-hold	%age	Money (in Rs.)	Per house-hold.	%age
Bhuiyan - 39	126.3	3.24	37.77	3,390	86.92	36.26
Kolha - 12	2.3	0.19	8.2	270	22.5	2.89
Kandha- 2	30.0	15.0	8.97	1,200	600.0	12.83
Pana - 26	50.7	1.95	15.16	370	14.23	3.95
Gauda- 10	68.5	6.85	20.48	1,940	194.0	20.75
Mahanta- 6	8.1	1.35	2.42	200	33.33	2.14
Chasa - 16	48.5	3.03	14.5	1,980	123.75	21.18
Total	334.4			9,350		100

The larger Chasa landowners of the village bring loan from their relatives. Shankarshan Pradhan has brought Rs.4,000/- and Jayadev Pradhan Rs. 2,500/- loan from their relatives. Alongwith this Shankarshan Pradhan has also managed to bring

loan from co-operative society, Land Development Bank a total of Rs. 5,000/- as he is a member of the Co-operative Society of Kala Panchayat and interacts with the Government officials. He has not used the loan amount brought for the very purpose, but has used for his personal, unproductive use. Then Natabara Pradhan, Kathi Sahu, Kolha Sahu, Purna Sahu and Daya Sahu, a small time moneylender do not have loans. The rest Chasa families depend entirely on the village moneylenders for loan.

Panas do not bring much loan from the moneylenders. The moneylenders also think them quarrelsome and do not give much loan. They are generally distrusted by the higher caste people of the area. There are only seven Panas who have brought Government Co-operative Society loan of Rs. 3,300/- each for the bullocks, carts and ploughs. But all of them have used that money for consumption and other unproductive use.

Among the Gaudas, only Guru Mahakud has a loan of 12 pudugs of paddy and Rs. 500/- taken to purchase land. Then Kastu Mahakud has a loan of Rs. 400/- taken for starting of a shop in the village. Besides these all the other loans are for consumption.

Mahantas, Kandhas, Kolhas take loan for consumption only. None of them have taken loan from Bank or Co-operative Society except Mansingh Munda, a Kolha, of Rs. 1,800/- for rearing goats. He has used half of the loan amount for that very purpose.

Bhuiyans take loan mainly for consumption. There are only a few cases where loans are taken to purchase bullocks. As the economic condition of all the Bhuiyans of the area is poor, they do not get financial help from their relatives and depend entirely on the village moneylenders.

The interest rate for paddy, money, rice and the seed is like the rate prevalent in Biringapur and Mishapur. But in Chaasapur and Sarkarpur as the people do not grow cereals like the tribals of Pauri, the loan is repayed only in paddy and money. The moneylenders insist on the payment of the interest of the existing loan strictly and if possible a part of the loan also.

The moneylenders give loan without any security. If the loan becomes very large, then the moneylenders demand the land for some years to recover the loan. This system is called Sāhumadāni. Here the debtor surrenders a land of proportional yield with the existing loan. If the total amount of loan cannot be recovered in a year, then the moneylender cultivates that land for some more years. There are only six families who had given their land in part or fully in Sāhumadāni. Duryodhan Sahu, a Chasa gave a land of ten pudugs yield to Kathi Sahu for the loan of 2.5 pudugs for six years. Badia Sahu, a Chasa had given his entire land of 10 pudugs to Kolha Sahu for the loan of 12 pudugs for one year. Girdhari

Sahu had also given his land of 2 pudugs to Kolha Sahu for the loan of 2 pudugs for one year. Bhaba Mahakud, a Gauda has given a land of 1 pudug to a Chasa moneylender of a nearby village for the loan of 2 pudugs for 2 years. But after the expiry of the contract also, the moneylender is still cultivating that land and Bhaba Mahakud is not taking interested to get that back as he does not have the implements and bullocks to cultivate his entire land. Kahnu Naik, a Pana had given a land of 2 pudugs to Kolha Sahu for the loan of 1.5 pudugs for one year. Then Handu Pradhan, a Bhuiyan has also given a land of 2 pudugs to Natabara Pradhan for the loan of 1 pudug for 3 years.

So here, three chasas, one Gauda, one Pana and a Bhuiyan have only given land in Sāhumadāni. The only Bhuiyan among them is from the family of the headman and also has got a small patch of Bahal land. The rate for Sāhumadāni is incommensurate with the yield and loan amount, as can be seen from the above examples. The system of Sāhumadāni is a recent phenomenon in Chaasapur. It has started in the year 1974.

The villagers demand money while mortgaging the land at the time of their urgency. This system of mortgaging is called Tankuli. Here a land of 1 pudug is mortgaged for the loan of Rs.100/- for one year. This was started only in

1976. There are 9 cases of Tankuli in the village since the year 1976. The contract is mainly between Panas. Out of 9 cases, 5 are within Panas. Then the rest 4 cases, where a Bhuiyan has given land to a Pana, two Panas have given to a Gauda and a Gauda to a Chasa. The amount of loan varies from Rs.60/- to Rs. 200/- and the contract period varies from one to two years. Here none of the large or small moneylenders are involved. This again shows the lack of interest towards the unproductive land of the poor villagers.

(b) Share Cropping:

This is known as Bhāguā. Here the share cropper gives the seed and does all the agricultural operations. The revenue is paid by the landowner. The harvested crop is divided between the landowner and sharecropper equally. This system of Bhāguā started in the year 1968. The first person, who leased out is Kumuda Pradhan a absentee landowner, one of the brothers of Shankarshan Pradhan. Before 1968, Shankarshan Pradhan was cultivating his land without Bhāguā. As he belongs to the last Gountia family, he has got the best variety of land of 9.28 acres. The Chasas, except the large landowners are the people who lease in that land. Besides this, there are only three cases of Bhāguā within the village. When Guru Mahakud was working as Halía from 1975 to 1980, he had given his land of 1.78 acres in share cropping. As he was not having the

required implements and bullocks, he preferred to work as Halia. Then Badia Sahu also for the same reason again gave a part of his land 1.5 acres in share cropping to Cheru Naik, a Pana of the village in 1980. Then Chandra Mahakud, when he was cowherd of the village, gave his entire land of 2 acres to Pathani Pradhan, a Bhuiyan for share cropping in 1979.

So in all the cases, the reason of sharecropping is the inability to cultivate the land as the landowners do not possess the required materials for cultivation.

(c) Other Factors Aiding Pauperisation:

(i) The land holding of the Bhuiyans is uneconomic. The average landholdings among the Bhuiyans is 0.55 acre. There are 32 households who own land from 0.5 acre to 2.00 acres and the rest 7 households are landless.

(ii) Most of the Bhuiyan families do not have the minimum required number of draught animals with them for the cultivation of their land. Out of 32 Bhuiyan land-owners, only 11 families have atleast a pair of bullocks, 2 families have one cow and a bullock, 8 families have either a cow or a bullock and the rest 11 families do not possess any draught animals at all. Those who do not have the animals or have only one, depend on their fellow people or the master if they work as Halia, otherwise the landowners bring animals in Baka, a system of hiring the inexperienced bullock for a year. The person who hires

takes the trouble of training the animals and at the end of the year gives 120 kgs. of paddy per bullock. Because of this constraint, Bhuiyans cannot complete various agricultural operations in time and also cannot plough the land properly with cows.

(iii) Bhuiyans bring the paddy seed from the moneylenders, which is of inferior quality than the non-tribals use.

(iv) Bhuiyans do not use manure in their fields. The land-owners purchase cowdung and ashes, the main manures used in the area from the Bhuiyans. On the occasion of Gahma Purnima, a festival falls in the month of August, the moneylenders impose the loanee Bhuiyans to take five rupees advance atleast for a cart load of cowdung and four rupees for a cart load of ashes, which they collect in summer. Those who deny to take these amounts for manure are denied loans throughout the year and also pressurised for early repayment of the existing loan. Though the market price of a cartload of cowdung and ashes are ten rupees and eight rupees respectively, they are forced to part with their manures with a small amount. Then the moneylenders keep a larger container just for this purpose.

(v) Along with the earlier problems, during the cultivation, especially during the peak period, they work as Bhutiar under the landowners of the village and neglect their own land.

(vi) During the rainy season, they go to the Pauri for the bamboo shoot, Pitālu and Baingā for their consumption as they finish all the harvested crops by that time.

(vii) Again before harvesting, the wild animals destroy the crop because of its nearness to the forest.

Thus, Bhuiyans, though own the land cannot cultivate to get a proper yield for their livelihood.

#### 6.7 LAND SALE

The first sale of settled land of 1.52 acres was by a Pana to Mahantas in 1952. Mahantas are the evacuated people from the Rourkela Steel Plant area. They got the compensation for the loss of their land and house from the Government and were looking for the cultivable land. Whereas the Panas, Chasas and Gaudas prepared the settled land from the waste land, Mahantas were looking for the already prepared land. During that time Bhuiyans had just stopped the shifting cultivation and were preparing settled land. The first sale of land was by a Chasa, who had no child. He sold an area of 2.98 acres, a portion of his land to Una Mahanta. Since Mahantas were giving money a much demanded thing in the area, they continued to get the lands of Panas and Chasas. Bhuiyans started selling lands only after 1967. The scarcity of suitable areas to make settled land and above all the



prepared settled land attract the needy towards the land of the Bhuiyans. The land sale within Chaasapur in different time period can be seen from Table 6.6.

TABLE 6.6: Land sale within Chaasapur during 1952- 1982.

Name of the caste/tribe	1952-61		1962-71		1972-77		1978-82	
	Land sold in acres	Purchased by	Land sold in acres	Purchased by	Land sold in acres	Purchased by	Land sold in acres	Purchased by
Pana	1.52	Mahanta	2.8	Mahanta Chasa	2.8	Pana	0.5	Chasa
Chasa	2.98	Mahanta	4.76	Mahanta	3.0	Chasa Gauda	1.75	Chasa, Gauda
Bhuiyan	-	-	3.60	Chasa Gauda	1.3	Gauda Pana	0.75	Chasa
Gauda	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.25	Chasa
Mahanta	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.0	Chasa

The Acre is calculated on the basis of the yield of land as the respondents could not tell the land sale or purchase in Acres. The unit taken is:

Bahal 5 pudugs yield = 1 Acre  
 Berna 3 pudugs yield = 1 Acre  
 Mal 2 pudugs yield = 1 Acre  
 Guda 2 pudugs yield = 1 Acre

As the land scarcity is not limited only to Chaasapur and the near proximity of other nearby villages also attract the needy landowners to the village. Then, like the evacuated Mahantas, people of the Rengali Dam Project area also come with compensation money to purchase land. The non-availability of prepared Bahal, and Berna land in the Chaasapur, the evacuated people satisfy themselves with the Mal and Guda land of the village. The uneconomic holding again encourages the Bhuiyans and other poor caste people to sale the land. The forces of modernization initiated the sale of land in both periods. One, first sale in the village when land was in abundance and second when land is scarce. The sale of land of Chaasapur to the non-villagers can be seen in Table 6.7.

TABLE 6.7: Land sale in Chaasapur during 1952-1982 to the non-villagers.

Name of the caste/tribe	1952-61		1962-71		1972-77		1978-82	
	Land sold in acre.	Purchased by	Land sold in acre.	Purchased by	Land sold in acre.	Purchased by	Land sold in acre.	Purchased by
Pana	-	-	-	-	2.0	Kishan	1.5	Chasa RDP.
Chasa	-	-	-	-	0.5	Chasa	-	-
Bhuiyan	-	-	-	-	2.0	Gauda Chasa	1.95	Chasa RDP.
Gauda	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.85	Chasa RDP.
Total					4.5		4.30	

RDP - Rengali Dam Project.

The land alienation of the poor caste and tribe people of the village changed the land distribution pattern drastically. The total cultivated area has increased since the arrival of the non-tribals. It is not known how many acres of land were under settled cultivation during the initial period of 1927 settlement. But in 1909, the last year of Gounti of Braja Pradhan the total land revenue was Rs. 111.00. Then it was increased to Rs. 200.00 during the headmanship of Gountia Karunakar Deb. In the last year of rule of Gountia Sanakarshan Pradhan the total land revenue was Rs. 555.00. So in 30 years the land revenue became five folded<sup>3</sup>. The increase in the area of cultivated settled land can be seen from the Table 6.8 prepared on the basis of 1927-52, 1952-81 and 1982 land records.

It can be seen from the table that the cultivated area has decreased in the first 30 years. During the colonial rule, the main interest of the Gountia was to collect more land revenue and was maintaining the land record without bothering for the actually cultivated area of the village. Then the various developmental programme by the king to increase the cultivated area by giving incentives also force the Gountia to show more cultivated area in the land record. Simultaneously, when the land record was showing more cultivated area, the

3. The information was collected from two of the oldest men of the village Chaasapur- Shankarshan Pradhan and Natabar Pradhan. Both of them were Gountias for some years.

TABLE 6.8: Total acre of land in Chaasapur during the years  
1927-52, 1952-81, and 1982.

Caste	1927-52	%age	1952-81	%age	1982	%age
1. Bhuiyan	50.82	18.13	29.95	11.90	21.62	7.90
2. Kolha	1.84	0.66	1.92	0.76	5.77	2.10
3. Kandha	4.70	1.68	3.0	1.20	8.84	3.23
4. Pana	39.84	14.21	28.95	11.50	25.04	9.15
5. Gauda	2.58	0.92	3.23	1.28	8.37	3.05
6. Chasa	140.73	50.20	161.23	64.0	180.53	65.97
7. Mahanta	2.35	0.84	16.62	6.60	16.85	6.16
8. Kamara	1.49	0.53	-	-	-	-
9. Kishan	12.15	4.33	6.95	2.76	6.68	2.44
10. Kshatriya	23.82	8.5	-	-	-	-
Total	280.32	100	251.85	100	273.67	100

peasants were leaving the land and the village as they were unable to pay the revenue. The peasants were going for Bethi labour for both the king and Gountia. The king was demanding Bethi labour for the construction of roads, ponds and his hunting expedition in the Pauri mainly during the harvesting time. So while all the menfolk were away from the villages, the wild animals, especially the elephants were destroying the standing crops. Since the Bethi work was continuing for 15-20 days continuously, the villagers were unable to collect the harvest and <sup>were</sup> remaining defaulters in paying the revenue. As a result of this, some were leaving the village and entering to the nearby Fallahara or Keonjhar state while the rest were depending on the moneylenders to pay the revenue.

After Independence the cultivated area has increased. Chasas have continued to expand their land whereas the Bhuiyans and Panas started losing their land. We have seen in Table 6.1 that Nayabadi land among Bhuiyans is only 0.67. Whereas among Chasas is 77.0%. So they have not made new lands during 1952-82 and hence the land have passed on to Chasas and other caste people of the village.

#### (a) New Land Prepared in Chaasapur:

As we have discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the preparation of new settled land is an expensive affair. Among the Chasas, only Kathi Sahu, Kolha Sahu and Natabara Pradhan

have made settled land of 2-5 acres. Natabara Pradhan brought the entire people of Biringapur for a day to make a settled land and gave them breakfast and lunch only. He slaughtered two goats for the meal. This type of cheap labour, known as Baj among Bhuiyans was used by Natabara Pradhan. Then Kolha Sahu also prepared a land of one acre and dug up a pond with the help of this type of labour of the Bhuiyans of Biringapur, Chaasapur and Kalādu, another tribal village of the Pauri. Kathi Sahu has made land only with the help of the Kolhas and his farm labourers. Besides this, almost all the non-tribals have extended or levelled their lands. All the Bhuiyans except the landless have extended their lands after Independence. During the off season, they dig and extend a little of their land. But the location, and the inferior variety of soil of the land and inefficient method of cultivation do not give them a proper yield.

(b) Land Sale in Sarkarpur:

Initially Bhuiyans were asked to prepare settled land from the available vast area of waste land around the village. When the water was supplied from the constructed barrage to the fields, each of them were owning approximately 3 acres of land. We could not get the exact figure of the land owned by the villagers as neither we got that from the villagers nor from the revenue office. The villagers have not been

paying land revenue since the establishment of the village in 1952. Land settlement has also not been made by the government. So, the ownership of land was calculated on the basis of the yield of the land.

When the barrage was destroyed by the flood, they depended only on the rainfall to water their fields. Some of the families abandoned their land and houses and went to their native village for shifting cultivation. Those who prefer to stay find it difficult to manage the crisis because of the failure of crop, which they were managing in the forest. The absence of required number of draught animals, good variety of seed, implements again weaken their cultivation. The moneylenders of Chaasapur also entered into business with the inhabitants of Sarkarpur. They started working as labourers in Chaasapur as we have described elsewhere in this chapter. The impoverishment led to the land sale in the village. They have sold the land to both the villagers and other villagers (see Table 6.9).

TABLE 6.9: Land sale in Sarkarpur

Period of sale	Within Sarkarpur			To the villagers of Chaasapur			To other villagers		
	Sold by	Acres	Purchased by	Sold by	Acres	Purchased by	Sold by	Acres	Purchased by
1965-70	Bhuiyans	2.0	Bhuiyans.	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
1971-76	Bhuiyans	0.5	Sabara	Bhuiyans	2.7	Chasas Gaudas	Bhuiyans	2.5	Chasas
1977-82	Nil	Nil	Nil	Bhuiyans Sabara	4.6	Chasas	Bhuiyans	6.6	Chasas RDP.

RDP - Rengali Dam Project people.

Though in the initial phase, land transfer was within the tribals of Sarkarpur, now the Chasas of Chaasapur are taking over in acquiring the land of the former village. Again in last one year the displaced people of the Rengali Dam Project have purchased 6.6 acres of land in Sarkarpur. Five Bhuiyans and one Sabara have sold these land. Still, none of the villagers is landless. They prepare new settled land of Mal and Guda variety from the available waste land around the village.



As we have discussed the process of land transfer in this chapter, the absence of commercialisation of agriculture and the availability of waste land around the village to make settled land are restricting the process of proletarianisation among the Bhuiyans and other poor tribals and non-tribals of Chaasapur and Sarkarpur. But pauperisation, which is the prelude to proletarianisation is continuing in these villages.

## CHAPTER VII

### CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP, PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS AND CLASS FORMATION\*

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

As we have seen in chapters V and VI, a process of increasing social differentiation is clearly visible as one moves from Biringapur to Chaasapur, with the change in agricultural practices. Simultaneous external influences of the "advanced" caste culture based on settled agriculture, market relations and high degree of interdependence accelerate the process of differentiation in these tribal communities.

These changes are transforming the character of social relations profoundly. The egalitarian relationships in the form of 'ceremonial friendship' amongst the traditional tribal communities which practised shifting cultivation is gradually being replaced by 'patron-client' relationships in the increasingly differentiated communities. The mechanism of this change is the main focus of this chapter. Towards the end, the question "Will the patron-client relationships be transformed into a class-based political movement is explored?"

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\* This chapter was presented in a UGC sponsored seminar on Peasant and Peasant Resistance in Eastern India in North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong in October, 1984. See the (Naik, S. and Jairath, V.K.) "Ceremonial Friendship, Patron-Client Relationships and Class Formation among the Bhuiyan tribals of Orissa" in M.N. Karna (ed.) Peasantry in Rural Protest, (forth coming).

Social conditions in rural areas of the Third World countries are discussed in terms of 'Patron-client' and/or class relationships. Herring states that the "Paradigms of rural south Asia frequently fall into mutually exclusive categories-one, the 'Patron-client' relationship and the other class-relationship based on profoundly unequal access to the primary means of production, a relationship which is structurally coercive and potentially conflictual" (Herring, 1981: 137; see also Scott, 1972: 91). But Alavi gives importance to 'Patron-client' relations and states that, "cleavages are not horizontal between strata but vertical constituting factions led often by rival landowners contending for power-status and political office" (Alavi, 1974: 420; also see Alavi, 1973). This does not allow class war with antagonistic interests but gives unchallenged control of the surrounding areas to people of the same class, the landlords. Srinivas reports from his village study in Mysore that "the relationship between master and his Jita servants (contract labourers), landowner and his tenants, creditor and his debtors and finally between rich man and his dependents may all be subsumed under a single relationship, patron and client" (Srinivas, 1955: 31). This type of relationship is found in the rural areas where people practise settled agriculture. Tribals, who are still at the stage of shifting cultivation and other allied primitive economic activities, live without the developed non-tribals in their

villages. The inaccessibility with the absence or the least settled wet land in the hilly tribal areas do not attract the developed<sup>1</sup> non-tribals to settle in those areas. The 'all-alike' economic condition of these hill tribals does not give the picture of dependence of the poor on the rich of plains rural areas. But gradually, the penetration of developed tribals and non-tribals of the nearby plains into their societies either for trade or forest-produce is making their economy more diversified and paving the way for the 'Patron-client' relationship.

It has been seen, generally that tribals like to make friends with non-kin members of their societies. They establish friendships on the occasion of various festivals or otherwise to show their affection for each other. The kinsmen and the non-kin friends of the village and also other villages provide them the security of timely help, both material and non-material. The continuous struggle with the nature for their survival without the improved implements necessitates them to maintain the harmonious relationship with each other. But gradually the society is becoming more differentiated with the change in agricultural practices, introduction of metal implements, plough and also the close interaction of the non-tribals

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1. The word 'developed' is used to describe the general socio-economic backwardness of the shifting-cultivators in comparison with the plains people.

with them. The change in the social structure of the tribal areas is also changing the nature of the tribal friendship.

In section 7.2, the terms, 'ceremonial friendship' and 'patron-client' are described. It is followed by a description of ceremonial friendship among the Bhuiyans (7.3) and then the friendship with plains areas Bhuiyans (7.4), plains area tribals (7.5), non-tribals (7.6) and then between plains areas Bhuiyans and other non-Bhuiyans (7.7). The changing nature of relationships through the friendship is presented in Section 7.8. A model to show the interaction of hill tribals, plains areas tribals and non-tribals is given in section 7.9. Lastly, patron-client relationships (7.10), change of friendship to patron-client relationship (7.11) and then the question of class formation is explored in section 7.12.

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE TERMS

### (a) Ceremonial Friendship:

Ceremonial friendship "is established by a distinctive type of ceremony and carries with it certain ritual obligations absent from ordinary friendship" (Jay, 1973: 144). Ordinary friendship or the less serious type of friendship (see Dube, 1949: 98) is that where ritual is not performed and the bond is made just because of the "mutual agreement or spontaneous

mutual urge" (Sinha and Ekka, 1979: 108) of two individuals. The longevity and the degree of attachment of the above mentioned two types of friendship is determined mainly by the frequency of the visit and the support in the difficult times of the individuals (see Sachidananda, 1966: 164).

The reasons behind establishing friendship are various. Bhowmick reported from Midnapur that the "motives behind formation of such friendships are working together in agriculture or other occupations, getting rid of or improvement of one's diseases, intimacy during pilgrimage, meeting in the festival and the possession of same name" (Bhowmick, 1961: 115). This relationship crosses the boundary of the village or community and brings a variety of ethnic groups in close harmonious relationship with each other. Dube concluded from his chatisgarh data that, "they bring together not only the unrelated families within the same tribe or caste but through them close inter-tribal and intercaste contacts are made possible" (Dube, 1949: 98). The plains villages which are mostly multicasite and the very nature of occupational division of labour in caste system bring the people of various castes in close contact with each other. But the interaction of the nearby isolated hilly tribals with the non-tribals and other plains tribals needs a historical explanation. The plains people establish close relationship with them through the various types of friendship of tribal nature instead of

imposing their own type at first but gradually the intercaste type of relationships also enter into the tribal societies. The establishment of these friendships is initiated by the plains people during the commercial transactions with the hill tribals. In Chotanagpur, the tribal belt of central India, almost all the tribals report that the market place is the origin of these types of friendships (Sinha, 1968: 90). The plains settled agriculturists or traders-caste Hindus have a relationship of different nature and interest with the settled agriculturists plains tribals and the shifting-cultivation tribals.

(b) Patron-Client Relationship:

'Patron-client' is a dyadic tie of asymmetrical relationship between two persons of unequal socio-economic condition. The patron, who is of better socio-economic condition "uses his influence to assist and protect some other person, who then becomes his client, and in return provides certain services to his patron" (Boissevain, 1966: 18). Wolf describes this relationship as follows: "Patron provides economic aid and protection against both the legal and illegal exactions of authority" and "the client in return pays back in more intangible assets" (Wolf, 1966: 17). The client spreads the goodwill of the patron among his people and brings as many clients as he can within the fold of the patron. He collects

the vital information about the rival patrons for his own patron.

This type of relationship "is associated with a low level of mechanization and technological and capital investment, the existence of few credit facilities and a low degree of development of communications" (Roniger, 1983 : 65). In a backward area of the above characteristics, Wolf finds the emergence of patron-client relationship out of friendship in the following manner: "when instrumental<sup>2</sup> friendship reaches a maximum point of imbalance so that one partner is clearly superior to the other in his capacity to grant goods and services we approach the critical point where friendships give way to the patron-client tie" (Wolf, 1966: 16). To strengthen the tie, "the patron and client relation often develops into fictive kinship, e.g., Dharma-bāap (God-parent) when the client renders some personal services" (Zaman, 1982: 276). Though the patron-client relationship emerges from friendship, the latter continues to be important, of course to a lesser extent, because of the persistence of the backwardness of the area. Now-a-days, the "representative democracy", various welfare measures by the Government, availability of employment

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2. Wolf describes the Instrument friendship as that one where 'each member of dyad acts as a potential connecting link to other persons outside the dyad, each participant is a sponsor for the other'.



opportunities in nearby or distant areas, improved literacy and mobility of people from one area to another because of better communication facility are giving a new direction to the patron-client relationship. The more backward an area with no or least welfare schemes of the Government and inaccessible to politicians the more the clients depend on rich, landlord patrons and, on the other hand, the more an area is exposed, the more it drifts away from traditional landlord patrons and favours the new political patrons. Studies from some of the developed countries show the decay of patron-client relationship in the long run. Theobald sees the decay of this relationship with development (Theobald, 1983: 138). Roniger also states that it is "deemed to disappear or become marginal with development" (Roniger, 1983: 68). But the process of development in the third world countries, where the landlords and other members of rural elite take the lion's share of benefits from welfare measures forces the poor to depend on the patrons. Therefore the change of patrons with development further strengthen the vertical ties of patronage.

Singelman reported from Latin America that "unless the clients look at the patrons collectively as members of the opposing class rather than seeing them as good or bad patrons" the vertical ties will continue and will an obstacle for class formation (Singelman, 1975: 402). But gradually when the clients are emancipated from their lands by the landlords

cum-moneylenders for their inability to repay the loan and also the commercialisation of agriculture all the clients will become homogeneous in their economic activities. The all-alike situation of the clients will bring about a class based political movement in rural areas.

### 7.3 CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP AMONG BHUIYANS

The Bhuiyans like the other tribes (see Archer, 1947: 47-60 and Sinha, 1968: 71-90) make friendship with the non-kin members of their villages and other villages. The interaction with the non-kins was probably the first cause of binding each other by the various types of friendship (see Sachidanand, 1966: 164-65). One of the other reasons of interaction with the tribals of other villages was meeting them in their villages and the forest on their way to distant villages and during hunting expeditions respectively. Since the Pauri was inhabited mainly by Bhuiyans, their friendships were initially limited within the same tribe. As we do not find warfare or hostility, as are found in other tribes in the available literature, friendships are made freely with the members of other villages and hence cements the 'what-so-ever' bitterness present among the villages. The unmarried boys and girls visit other villages in groups for dancing and make friendship with boys and girls of those villages. This type of inter-village relationship is found among Oraons, a tribe

of central India, in a more explicit manner. The Oraons exchange flags with other villages on the occasion of Bhāyari and the boys of different villages bind each other by Sangi type of friendship (Sachidananda, 1966: 165).

The importance of friendship depends on its nature, whether originally tribal or non-tribal and the rituals attached to it. The friendships of non-tribal nature and which is not formed in front of their deity, are given less importance by the Bhuiyans. We will group all these into two categories for convenience of explanation in this chapter. Those two categories are: serious type and casual type.

(a) Serious Type of Friendship:

Sahi and Karamdāl are the two most serious types of friendship found among Bhuiyans. Sahi is made on the occasion of Bisri (village deity) festival, and sacred rice, flowers are exchanged in front of the deity, whereas Karamdāl is made on the occasion of Karmā festival and a branch of Karmā tree (sal tree) is exchanged in front of the karmā deity between two individuals. These are made within the same sex irrespective of the age of the participants. But in case of Sahi the flexibility of age is more and the parents bind their kids with oldmen and women. The reason behind the relationship with a older one is the belief that the kids will also live a longer life like them. Benisāgar is a type of

friendship of this category, where the sacred rice and flower of the Bisri festival is exchanged on some ordinary days when two men or women want to enter into this type of friendship. This is the less serious version of Sahi friendship.

(b) Casual Type of Friendship:

Maitra, Sangata, Jamira, Phula, Phala, Makara and Dharma Pua/Jhia are the friendships of this type. All these are not attached to any sacred objects and are made on ordinary days to fulfill their emotional needs. Maitra is the result of the possession of same name by two men or women. Sangata is a type of friendship made to satisfy the emotional urge of two men or women. Jamira and Phala (fruit) are made only within women. Instead of calling the friends as Phala, the participants call each other in the name of that particular fruit, e.g. Kamlā (orange) Lembu (lemon) Gahama (wheat) etc. Jamira (an affectionate term of address among females) and Lājakuli (name of a plant) are made within females.

Phula type of friendship is made in the name of various flowers like Nemel, Nangā, Bakurmā, Badhal, Lembu, Malli, Baula (mango) Kain (water lily), Jahni etc. Though men also establish these types of friendship, they do not go for the variety of flowers like women. Unlike Phala, where the term of address is that particular fruit, here they address each other only as Phula except Baula. Phula is a widely made

friendship both by men and women.

Makara and Dharma Pua/Jhia (God son/daughter) are the two types of non-tribal friendship found among Bhuiyans. Though these two need an elaborate ceremony, as practised in the non-tribal areas, Bhuiyans have accepted them without the ritual aspect of these. Makara is solemnised on the day of Makara Sankranti, first day of the month of Māgh (January-February). The sacred rice is exchanged and promised for the continuity of the friendship with the prescribed obligations in front of the elders. Among Hindus, new clothes and other presentations are exchanged between the friends, but Bhuiyans do not go for those costly affair. They exchange the sacred rice brought from the non-tribal Hindu area and treat each other with liquor.

Dharma Pua/Jhia is widely prevalent among Hindus and also in other countries (see Mayer, 1960: 143; Sarker, 1980: 55-61; Foster, 1951: 1173-1192 and Pitt-Rivers, 1954: 140). Unlike the close interaction between the two families and the obligation of the 'God-Parents' towards their 'God-Children' as are found among Hindu people and other societies, here the relationship is very formal. There is only one tribal couple in the Biringapur, preachers of Krishna Guru (Sri Krishna Cult, who establish this type of relationship with the children of their devotees.

These are the various types of friendship recorded in two Bhuiyan villages, Biringapur and Mishapur of the Pāuri. In all these, the participants do not take the name of their friends and address them by that particular friendship. This is more strict in the serious types than the casual type of friendship.

#### 7.4 OBLIGATIONS

Once the relationship is established the participants pay frequent visits, invite during the important ceremonies and help each other during the difficult times. Though it is a relationship between two individuals, it binds two families closely. If a man is a friend of some one, the wife also addresses him like her husband and vice versa. Though no boy can have the friendship of the above mentioned types with the girls, he addresses them by these terms during the dance and other happy times.

The friendship and the gifts move together in tribal societies. "The principle of give and take pervades tribal life; reciprocity is the basis of social order" (Malinowski, 1926: 4). It is a alliance, solidarity and communion in the tribal society. Shalins states that "the gift is the primitive way of achieving the peace that in civil society is secured by the state" (Sahlins, 1972: 169). Since all the hill Bhuiyans practise shifting cultivation and grow more or less the same variety of

crops, the gifts are almost same in all cases. Whenever a Bhuiyan visits a friend's house he takes paddy, rice, pulses, vegetables or the home made liquor with him and the other also sends him off with the same kind of presents. The boys take Khaj (parched paddy) Mudhi (parched rice), and Gudākhu (intoxicated dental paste) for the girls when they go to other villages for dancing and in return the girls entertain them with a feast. The girls also present Khaj, Mudhi and Birbi (tobacco wrapped with dry leaf) to the boys. Here the gifts between the boys and girls is not home made products but are purchased from the market. When a messenger comes from other village he gets rice to prepare liquor in his native village as a gift. When we shifted to Biringapur five persons of Mishapur went with us carrying our luggages for which they got four kgs. of rice to prepare liquor as gifts from the Biringapur. The same thing was repeated when we came again to Mishapur with two persons of Biringapur to collect some relevant materials. They could not be given rice on the same day as the Headman of the Mishapur was absent but was sent the next day. The principle of "friends make gifts and gifts make friends" (Sablins, 1972: 186) cements the indifference among Bhuiyans both within and outside the village. Whenever a guest comes to the village the non-kin members, generally of the same age become the prospective friends of the guest and ultimately he leaves with a number of friends in the village. These

friendships within the same tribe, and socio-economic status give a picture of symmetry and 'we' feeling among themselves.

#### 7.5 CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP OF HILL BHUIYANS WITH PLAINS AREAS BHUIYANS

The plains Bhuiyans live with the non-tribals in the same village or in the nearby villages and practise settled agriculture. In the village Chaasapur, the Bhuiyans are no more in an egalitarian set up like the Biringapur and Mishapur. Rather a clear cut differentiation is marked among them. Shifting cultivation was stopped after Independence and in the mean time the non-tribals had cornered the best land of the village. Lack of idea of settled agriculture and capital to purchase new iron implements and also to make new settled wet lands forced them to depend on rich non-tribal landowners of the village. The complexity of social relations in the plains has taught them to build up superficial relationships with an interest to appropriate surplus from others to some extent. But the impossibility of overtaking the non-tribals they look for their fellow people of hill areas. The Bhuiyans of the Chaasapur consider themselves advanced in comparison with the villagers of Biringapur and Mishapur. Since, they belong to the same tribe, establish marital relationships, and meet each other in various tribal meetings and ceremonies, they do not find any difficulty to establish confidence with the hill Bhuiyans. The only interest of the plains Bhuiyans is to



get forest produce and the produce of their fields. The difference of the economic activity and the development of these two groups give a picture of asymmetrical relationship. It is reported by almost all Bhuiyan informants of the village Chaasapur that they make friendships with hill Bhuiyans to get the produce of their fields, and in return they give less than what the hill Bhuiyans exchange between themselves.

#### 7.6 CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP OF HILL BHUIYAN WITH THE PLAINS AREAS NON-BHUIYANS

This is also a relationship like the plains Bhuiyans. The interaction of the hill Bhuiyans with the tribals like Kisān, Gond, Kolha, Sabara in their day to day business results in this type of friendship. When a group of Kisāns came to Biringapur to prepare a new settled land for Mangala Pradhan, the leader of the group established Sahi relationship with him. In the village Mishapur, a Kolha carpenter established Sahi relationship with Jugi Pradhan, the eldest son of the Headman during his stay in the village. Panu Kala, a Sabara made friendship of various types with the tribals of Biringapur and Mishapur during his hunting expedition in the forest. He gets food, shelter and the help in hunting and in return gives a small share of the hunt to them. But most of the time he leaves the villages unsuccessfully. All these friendships of serious type are made on the ordinary days.

## 7.7 CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP OF THE HILL BHUIYANS WITH THE NON-TRIBALS

The generous gift giving nature and hospitality of the hill Bhuiyans attracted the non-tribals at first to get the produce of their fields and other forest produce like mango, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, etc. Gradually when their economy became more diversified and the self-sufficiency was destroyed by the policy of the British and latter on by the Indian Government, the non-tribal landowners started the business of money lending to appropriate them. Since they do not need a huge amount of loans, almost all the non-tribal landowners become the prospective moneylenders for them. The major loans are taken from the professional moneylenders and the day to day loan for daily consumption is taken from the middle and small landowners of the plains. Generally during the lean period the Bhuiyans go to the non-tribal areas for loan and they prefer to take loan from their non-tribal friends. Even they bind the Bhuiyans with various types of friendships just before giving the loans. Maguni Sahu, a Chasa of plain area who was giving a major share of loan before the takeover by Yudhistir Sahu, the present moneylender of the Biringapur, is the Sahi of the Headman's son. Yudhistir Sahu binds his son with Dangu Dehuri of Biringapur with Sahi friendship. Bhikhari Pradhan who keeps buffaloes and gives loan is the Sahi of the Headman of Biringapur. Yogeswar Naik and his wife are the God Parents

of Peon Mantri of Biringapur. Peon Mantri looks after his buffaloes and gets loan without interest from him. All these tribal friends of the moneylenders help them to run their business smoothly and in return get loans in time and occasionally with less interest.

All the categories of friendship discussed above of the villages Biringapur and Mishapur can be seen from the Table 7.1 and 7.2. Since the village Biringapur is situated in an inaccessible area and far away from the plains, there is minimum contact with the non-tribals, whereas the village Mishapur is easily approachable and the non-tribals come frequently to the village. It is marked from the tables that the friendships of tribal nature is more prevalent in the village Biringapur and less in the village Mishapur. Then, the friendships of non-tribal nature is more in the village Mishapur than the village Biringapur. The number of ceremonial friendships of various types with the non-tribals and other plains tribals is more in the village Mishapur than the village Biringapur (See the Tables 7.3 and 7.4).

TABLE 7.1 : Ceremonial Friendships in village Biringapur by sex

Sl. No.	Name of the friendship	Male		Female		Total	%age
		Within the village	Out-side the vill.	Within the vill.	Out-side the vill.		
1.	Sahi	14 (41.18)	29 (44.60)	12 (15.19)	14 (30.44)	69	(31.0)
2.	Karamdāl	15 (44.12)	4 ( 6.15)	14* (17.72)	3 ( 6.52)	36	(16.0)
3.	Benisāgar	-	2 ( 3.1 )	-	-	2	( 0.8)
4.	Phula	1 ( 2.94)	5 ( 7.7 )	28 (35.44)	6 (13.04)	40	(18.0)
5.	Lājākuli	-	-	2 ( 2.53)	1 ( 2.17)	3	( 1.3)
6.	Jamira	-	-	6 ( 7.6)	-	6	( 2.6)
7.	Phala	-	-	4 ( 5.06)	1 ( 2.17)	5	( 2.2)
8.	Maitra	2 ( 5.88)	5 ( 7.7)	1 ( 1.27)	-	8	( 3.6)
9.	Sangāta	-	3 ( 4.61)	-	-	3	( 1.3)
10.	Makara	-	1 ( 1.53)	10 (12.66)	5 (10.87)	16	( 7.2)
11.	Dharma Pua/ Jhia	2 ( 5.88)	16 (24.61)	2 ( 2.53)	16 (34.79)	36	(16.0)
Total		34 (100)	65 (100)	79 (100)	46 (100)	224	(100)

\* Only one Jamdāl, a type of friendship made with the exchange of a branch of Jamun tree is included here.

TABLE 7.2: Ceremonial Friendships in the Village Mishapur by Sex.

Sl. No.	Name of the friendship	Male		Female		Total	%age
		Within the vill.	%age Out-side the vill.	Within the vill.	%age Out-side the vill.		
1.	Sahi	48 (36.6)	67 (50.8)	51 (49.5)	51 (59.8)	221	(48.3)
2.	Karmadāl	44 (33.6)	4 (3.0)	17 (16.5)	5 (5.4)	70	(15.3)
3.	Benisāgar	-	-	-	1 (1.1)	1	(0.2)
4.	Phula	1 (0.8)	17 (12.9)	10 (9.5)	11 (12.0)	39	(8.5)
5.	Lājākuli	-	-	1 (1.0)	1 (1.1)	2	(0.4)
6.	Jamira	-	-	4 (4.0)	1 (1.1)	5	(1.1)
7.	Phala	-	-	1 (1.0)	-	1	(0.2)
8.	Maitra	-	13 (9.8)	-	-	13	(2.8)
9.	Sangāta	2 (1.5)	14 (10.6)	-	3 (3.2)	19	(4.2)
10.	Makara	36 (27.5)	17 (12.9)	19 (18.5)	15 (16.3)	87	(19.0)
Total		131 (100)	132 (100)	103 (100)	92 (100)	458	(100)

TABLE 7.3: Caste-wise Distribution of Ceremonial Friendships of the village Piringapur

Sl. No.	Name of the friendship	H.B. HB	P.B. PB	N.B. NB	S.C. SC	O.C. OC	Total
		%age	%age	%age	%age	%age	%age
1.	Sahi	51 (31.4)	4 (15.5)	6 (60.0)	-	8 (34.8)	69 (31)
2.	Keramadal	35* (21.5)	1 (3.8)	-	-	-	36 (16)
3.	Benisagar	1 (0.6)	1 (3.8)	-	-	-	2 (1)
4.	Phula	27 (16.6)	6 (23.1)	-	-	7 (30.5)	40 (18)
5.	Lajakuli	2 (1.2)	1 (3.8)	-	-	-	3 (1)
6.	Jamira	6 (3.7)	-	-	-	-	6 (3)
7.	Phala	5 (3.0)	-	-	-	-	5 (2)
8.	Maitra	3 (1.8)	1 (3.8)	2 (20.0)	1 (100)	1 (4.3)	8 (4)
9.	Sangata	2 (1.2)	1 (3.8)	-	-	-	3 (1)
10.	Makara	12 (7.3)	3 (11.5)	-	-	1 (4.3)	16 (7)
11.	Dharma Pua/ Jhla	19 (11.7)	8 (30.9)	3 (30.0)	-	6 (26.1)	36 (16)
Total		163 (100)	26 (100)	10 (100)	1 (100)	23 (100)	223 (100)

\* Only one Jamdal, a type of friendship made with the exchange of a branch of Jamun tree is included here.

H.B. - Hill Bhuiyan

P.B. - Plain Bhuiyan

N.B. - Non-Bhuiyan

S.C. - Scheduled Caste

O.C. - Other Caste

Tribals

TABLE 7.4: Caste-wise Distribution of Ceremonial Friendships in the Village Mishapur

Sl. No.	Name of the friendship	H.B. No.	H.B. %age	P.B. No.	P.B. %age	N.B. No.	N.B. %age	S.C. No.	S.C. %age	O.C. No.	O.C. %age	Total No.	Total %age
1.	Sahi	138	(47.1)	25	(71)	28	(68)	3	(42.8)	27	(33)	221	(48.25)
2.	Karamadāl	67	(22.9)	-	-	2	(5)	-	-	1	(1.3)	70	(15.25)
3.	Benisāgar	1	(0.3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(0.25)
4.	Phula	12	(4.1)	2	(6)	1	(2.5)	1	(14.3)	23	(28)	29	(8.5)
5.	Lājākuli	2	(0.7)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	(0.5)
6.	Jamira	4	(1.4)	1	(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	(1)
7.	Phala	1	(0.3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(0.25)
8.	Maitra	1	(0.3)	2	(6)	1	(2.5)	1	(14.3)	8	(10)	13	(3)
9.	Sangāta	4	(1.4)	-	-	4	(10)	-	-	11	(13)	19	(4)
10.	Makara	63	(21.5)	5	(14)	5	(12)	2	(28.6)	12	(14.7)	87	(19.0)
Total		293	(100)	35	(100)	41	(100)	7	(100)	82	(100)	458	(100)

H.B. - Hill Bhuiyan	P.B. - Plain Bhuiyan
N.B. - Non-Bhuiyan Tribals	S.C. - Scheduled Caste
O.C. - Other Caste	

## 7.8 CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE PLAINS BHUIYANS AND THE NON-BHUIYAN TRIBALS

Since both the groups stay in the same area, practise settled agriculture, the interest of the non-tribals lies in getting labour and giving loans. They address the Bhuiyans as Sahi or Makara to get their work done. In the non-tribal areas generally the elders refer the youngsters as Pua (son), Jhia (daughter), and also to the persons of Châasapur. We have found that even the tribals are addressed as the terms prevalent in the non-tribal areas, making the tribal terms of address obsolete. It is found by cross checking that, the Bhuiyans believe with the address of the non-tribals and consider them as their friends, but the non-tribals do not take them seriously except the motive of getting their work done. (See Table 7.5 for the various types of friendship and caste-wise distribution of them).



TABLE 7.5: Ceremonial Friendships in Chaasapur

Caste/Name of the friendship	Sex	HB	PB	NB	SC	OC	Total	%age
(A) Bhuiyan								
(i) Sahi	Male	19	13	1	-	4	37	51 (77.3)
	Female	5	7	2	-	-	14	
(ii) Karamdāl	Male	-	5	1	-	-	6	8 (12.1)
	Female	1	1	-	-	-	2	
(iii) Makara	Male	-	2	-	1	3	6	6 (9.1)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	
(iv) Sangāta	Male	-	-	1	-	-	1	1 (1.5)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total		25	28	5	1	7	66	(100)
(B) Kolha								
(i) Sahi	Male	1	4	-	7	-	12	14 (93.3)
	Female	-	1	-	1	-	2	
(ii) Makara	Male	-	-	-	1	-	1	1 (6.7)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total		1	5	-	9	-	15	(100)

contd....

(C) Kandha

(i) Sahi	Male	1	-	-	-	3	4	4	(66.8)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(ii) Chānda	Male	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	(16.6)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(iii) Mahā- Prasād	Male	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	(16.6)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Total		1	-	-	1	4	6	(100)	

(D) Pāna

(i) Sahi	Male	-	-	-	3	1	4	6	(19.3)
	Female	-	-	-	2	-	2		
(ii) Makara	Male	1	1	-	3	8	13	17	(55.0)
	Female	-	-	-	3	1	4		
(iii) Chānda	Male	-	-	-	4	-	4	5	(16.1)
	Female	-	-	-	1	-	1		
(iv) Sangāta	Male	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	(3.2)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(v) Baula	Male	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	(3.2)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(vi) Phagu	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(3.2)
	Female	-	-	-	-	1	1		
Total		1	1	1	16	12	31	(100)	

contd.....

(E) Gauda

(i) Sahi	Male	2	1	-	-	-	3	3	(23.0)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(ii) Makara	Male	-	2	-	1	1	4	6	(46.0)
	Female	-	-	-	1	1	2		
(iii) Maitra	Male	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	(7.8)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(iv) Sangāta	Male	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	(7.8)
	Female	-	-	-	-	-	-		
(v) Chānda	Male	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	(16.4)
	Female	-	1	-	-	-	1		
Total		2	5	2	2	2	13	(100)	

(F) Mahanta

(i) Sahi	Male	-	-	1	-	1	2	6	(75.0)
	Female	-	-	2	-	2	4		
(ii) Makara	Male	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	(25.0)
	Female	-	-	-	1	-	1		
Total		-	-	3	2	3	8	(100)	

(G) Chasā

(i) Sahi	Male	-	-	-	-	2	2	4	(80.0)
	Female	-	1	-	-	1	2		
(ii) Makara	Male	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(20.0)
	Female	-	1	-	-	-	1		
Total		-	2	-	-	3	5	(100)	

Grand Total 30 41 11 31 31 144

## 7.9 CHANGE OF CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP AMONG THE BHUIYANS

In the village Biringapur and Mishapur, the non-tribals establish confidence among the Bhuiyans through various types of friendship. The non-tribals change the nature of friendship and impose their own types among them. Sahi, which is established only during the Bisri festival, no longer remains serious and can be made at any time and place. Ceremonial friendship gives legitimacy to interact freely with the Bhuiyans. Once it is established, its content is transformed and economic aspect becomes more important than the ritual aspect. "Gift" becomes primary and ritual secondary. In the Biringapur and Mishapur, where the non-tribal moneylenders started their business, after satisfying the leaders through friendship and gifts, establish their political dominance in the village through their business. The Headman and the leaders become musclemen and mediators. All the important decisions of the village are made only after consultation with the powerful non-tribals. When we went to the village Mishapur, after our pilot study, the Headman took us to the moneylender and we had to explain the purpose of our study to him. Then the moneylender of the Biringapur also came to meet us in the village and enquired about our activities. The hold of the moneylenders of the Biringapur and Mishapur can be seen from the amount of loan they have given to the villagers ( see Table 7.6 and 7.8).

TABLE 7.6: Amount of loan given by two main moneylenders to the tribals of Biringapur

Name of the commodities	Total amount of loan given	Yudhistir Sahu	%age	Maguni Sahu	% age
Paddy	5,691 Kgs.	5,090 Kgs.	(89)	255	(4)
Rice	268	198	(73)	27	(10)
Money	325	95	(29)	120	(36)
Paddy seed	470	470	(100)	-	
Gangei	78	40	(51)	-	
Birhi Seed	14	14	(100)	-	
Tilā seed	5	5	(100)	-	

TABLE 7.7 : Amount of loan given by two main moneylenders to the tribals of the village Mishapur

Name of the commodities	Total amount of loan given	Tikeswar Pradhan	%age	Bhalu Sahu	%age
Paddy	9,833 Kgs.	5,560 Kgs.	(57)	1,195	(12)
Rice	357	8	(2)	6	(1.6)
Money	442	223	(50) <sup>‡</sup>	9	(2)
Paddy seed	140	-	-	-	-

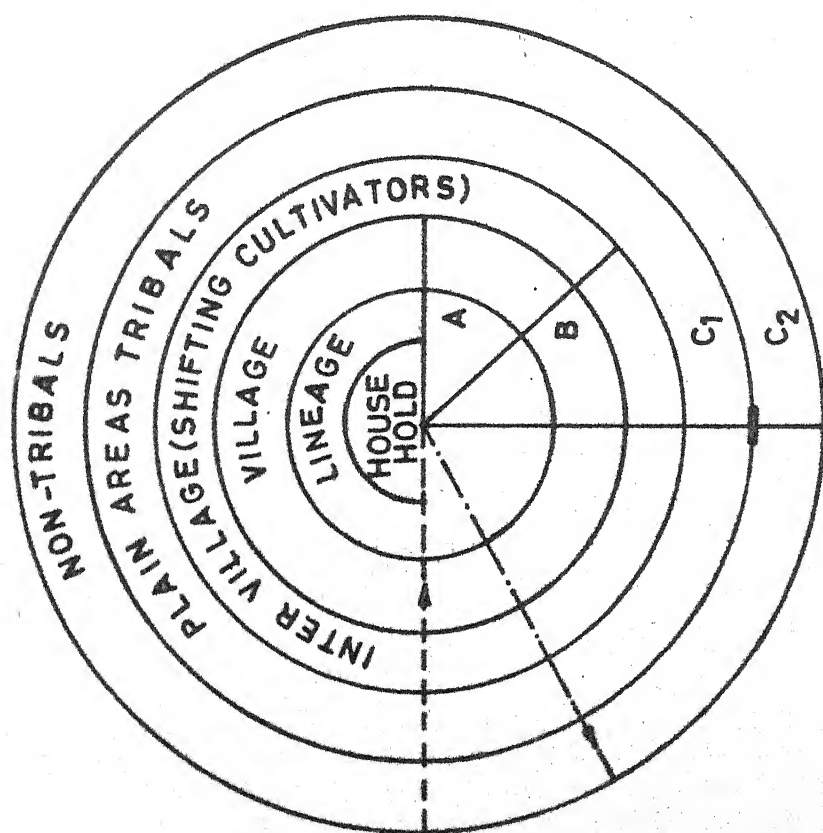
Not only do the outsiders introduce new types of relationship from plains to the hill tribals but they also transform the character of traditional egalitarian tribal friendship into the image of their own patron-client relationships of exploitative nature. In fact, as differentiations proceeds within the hill tribal communities, patron-client types relationships tend to dominate even amongst tribals themselves.

#### 7.10 MODEL TO SHOW THE INTERACTION OF HILL TRIBALS, PLAINS TRIBALS AND NON-TRIBALS

Sahlins has given a diagrammatic model to explain 'kinship and residential sectors' of tribal society (1972:199). Vidyarthi and Rai also used the same model in the Indian situation (1977: 104-108). Sahlins suggests three types of reciprocity- Generalized, Balanced and Negative. Generalized reciprocity refers to a situation where it is altruistic and found within close kinsmen; gifts depend on the ability of the individuals. Balanced reciprocity refers to direct exchange, where goods received and those returned are equal, and the transaction is not delayed. The emotional attachment is less here than the generalized reciprocity. Negative reciprocity is that where one "attempts to get something for nothing" (see Sahlins, 1972: 193-196).

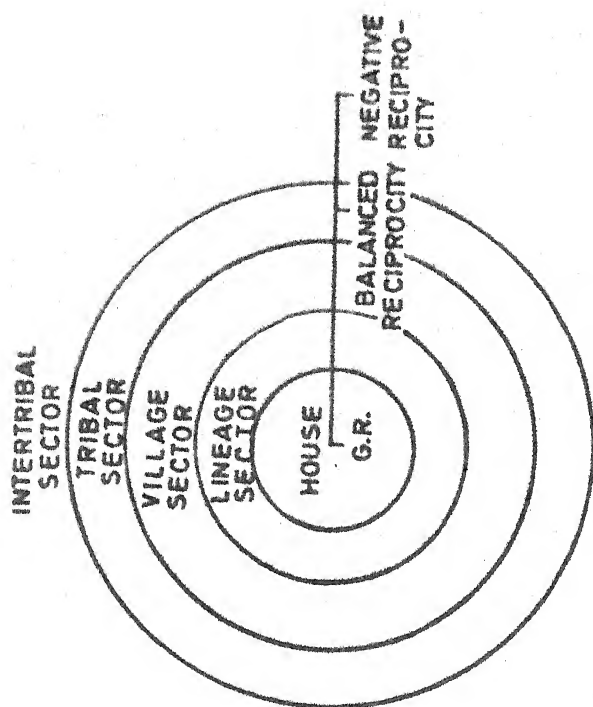
If we look at the Indian situation, where we find shifting cultivators, settled agriculturist tribals and the non-tribals using this model, we will find a different picture than the general type of description given by Vidyarthi and Rai (see the Maps 7.1 and 7.2).

Here in the sector 'A' the exchange is between the kinsmen or the friends who are attached with each other through the ceremonial friendship. All of them help each other and exchange the same commodities produced by them. The 'give and take' within this sector is not given the equal weightage. In the sector 'B', since the commodities produced by them is more or less same, and it involves two different villages, the 'give and take' is made on the spot without delay, with the notion of equal weightage. But the example of gifts between the Biringapur and Mishapur on the account of our visit described earlier shows that, the more remote and tribal nature a village maintains, the more it follows the rule of the gifts. The villagers of Biringapur gave rice for liquor on the spot whereas the village Mishapur did not give on the very day. It shows that the more exposed a tribal village, interact with the outside world the more it drifts away from the tribal customs. In the sector 'C' the difference between  $C_1$  and  $C_2$  is only the difference of degree of appropriation. In general, the tribal-tribal friendship is more sacred and the tribal-non-tribal friendship is more commercial. Ceremonial friendship



- A Generalized reciprocity  
 B Balanced reciprocity  
 C Negative reciprocity

----- Seriousness of the friendship tie  
 ----- Commercial friendship tie



RECIPROcity AND KINSHIP RESIDENTIAL SECTORS

(SAHLINS, 1972: 199)

MAP: 7.1 A MODEL TO SHOW THE EXCHANGE OF GIFTS.



is the starting point of exploitation and over the length of space and time it will become increasingly commercial. The deeper one goes, one will find the personal attachment and the outer one moves one will find the impersonal commercial relationship.

#### 7.11 PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

In the village Chaasapur Sankarashan Pradhan, the Gountia was the only patron before Independence. He was collecting revenue, allotting lands to the peasants and giving loans to them. He was getting Bethi from the peasants during ploughing and harvesting. After the Independence he no longer remains powerful and the power shifted to other landlord-~~and~~ moneylenders. There are three main non-tribal moneylenders in the village, who control the moneylending business of fifteen villages of the nearby areas. Even the Gountia brings loan from Kathi Sahu, the richest among them. The amount of loan given by these three moneylenders and other can be seen from Table 7.8.

TABLE 7.8 : Amount of loan given by the three main money-lenders of the village Chaasapur

Name of the commodities	Total loan	Kathi Sahu	%age	Kolha Sahu	%age	Natabara Sahu	%age
Paddy	349.3 P*	143.2 P*(41.0)		126.7P* (36.0)		39.4P* (11.0)	
Money	9,750.0	7,225	(74.0)	995	(10.0)	30	(0.3)
Rice**	10 Kgs.	-	-	10 Kgs. (100.0)		-	

P\* - Means Pudug, unit of measurement of Paddy.

1 Pudug = 20 Khandis,

1 Khandi = 20 Tāmbis

1 Tāmbi = 1 kg. (Approx.)

\*\* No one takes rice as loan in the villages Chaasapur. The person who has taken loan is a migrant from the hilly areas and working as a farm labourer. This loan he had taken when he was in his native village, Kalādu.

The family history of Kathi Sahu and Kolha Sahu shows that, they started the money-lending business on a large scale just a decade ago. When they arrived in the village during the colonial regime, their father was working as a cook in the Gountia's house. The Gountia took pity and allotted land to him. Gradually the family picked up the business of money-lending like others by establishing friendships with the Bhuiyans. The son of Kathi Sahu is a matriculate and Kolha Sahu studied upto class four. They do not have the reach to the Government officials like Shankarshan Pradhan, whose brothers are engineer, lecturer, district school Inspector and sons are also college educated. The Gountia is a member of the panchayat and is also a contractor. So he interacts freely with the bureaucrats. In 1980 the village was divided into two factions, one led by the Gountia and the other by Kathi Sahu and Kolha Sahu. One is powerful for his money- power and the other for his link with the officials. Natabara Sahu, the ex-Gountia and a landlord-cum-moneylender remains neutral. The reason of the factions as reported by the villagers is the attempt to break the marriage of the daughter of Kathi Sahu with the chosen bridegroom by the Gountia. The Bhuiyans and others who take loans from 'Kathi-Kolha' group are their followers whereas the independents and the lessdependents on the above group are the followers of the Gountia. The followers of 'Kathi-Kolha' are illiterate and the followers

of the other leader are literate and well aware of the outside world. Harijans, Mahantas, Kolhas and two Chasā families are the followers of the Gountia. Harijans do not take much loan from moneylenders and get loan from Government Co-operative Society. The Gountia helps them to get the loan. Kolha hamlet is near the Gountia's house and they do not bring loans. Mahantas are a prosperous, hardworking caste and do not depend on loan. The close proximity of their hamlets to the Gountia's house also help the latter to mobilise them. In 1981 the Harijans objected to Kolha Sahu for his hidden business on the Government quota of subsidised rice, sugar and kerosene. Kolha was not distributing the commodities and was selling to traders at a higher rate and was pocketing the money. Ultimately the dealership was snatched away from him and was given to a Harijan. This resulted in the full inclination of them towards the Gountia group. The 'Kathi-Kolha' groups denial of giving loan to them again moved them to the other end.

#### 7.12 CEREMONIAL FRIENDSHIP TO PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

In the villages Biringapur, Mishapur and Chaasapur, the moneylenders are the patrons of the Bhuiyans and the Headmen no longer have control over them. The ceremonial friendships which initially established the money lenders as the patrons among Bhuiyans has become obsolete. The relationships have become 'instrumental' or 'lop sided'. In the villages Biringapur

and Mishapur, where the plough culture with settled wet lands is increasingly becoming dominant over the shifting cultivation the difference in technologies and investment in private wet lands is also changing the traditional simplistic ceremonial friendships in the Bhuiyan society. The Headmen and other leaders of the society are taking up the small time money-lending within the villages. The isolation of the village Biringapur and Mishapur with no non-tribals to alienate 'what so ever' the settled land, is helping the Headmen and other leaders to hold the political structure of the village both by their traditional and money power. The Pyramid of vertical patron-client ties keeping the non-tribal moneylender at the top, Headman and the leaders in the middle and the commoners at the bottom gives the privilege of absolute control of the village to the non-tribal money-lender.

In the village Chaasapur, where the rival landlords struggle for status and political power, what manifests, as stated by Alavi, is "not class-war but, rather, the unchallenged domination of the political arena by members of a single class, the landlords" (Alavi, 1974: 420).

### 7.13 CHANGING SITUATION

When we were taking the interview of the tribals in the village Biringapur and Mishapur, and enquiring about the gift given and taken by them, they realised the motive behind the

friendship and stated that, henceforth they will not make friendship with the non-tribals. The younger boys are infact not making any more friendships with them.

In Chaasapur, when a non-tribal addressed a tribal boy as "son" to get some of his work done, the boy suddenly became angry and said. "I am not your son. You people have taken everything from us by telling these sweet words". It may appear as an isolated case, but it shows the general dissatisfaction towards the appropriator. The Harijans, who are raising their voices against the moneylenders and taking the benefit of the Government sponsored welfare scheme may give encouragement to the Bhuiyans to turn their dissatisfaction into protest. The school going Bhuiyan boys and girls, after some years may become more conscious and raise their voices against the land lord-cum-moneylender patrons along with the Harijans and the like.

Though the change of patrons from economic to political character by the clients signifies the development and better political awareness among the clients than the previous one, it still attaches to the vertical ties of patronage. But gradually when the clients will be deprived of their land by the landlords-cum-moneylenders for their inability to repay the loan and also the commercialisation of agriculture, all the clients may become homogeneous in their economic activities

The all-alike situation of the clients with no or least dependence on the local patrons will generate conditions which would potentially lead to a class- based political movement amongst the tribals.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

In the present study we have primarily focussed on the dynamics of change of a tribal society. Most of the earlier studies of tribal communities in India have emphasized the egalitarian nature, thus banishing any role for internal contradictions to generate social change in such communities. Almost invariably, the origin of change is sought in external factors and contacts. On the other hand, we have tried to demonstrate the significance of internal contradictions as the basic motive force to drive the wheel of transformation. However, the external factors accelerated the pace of transition.

First of all, a community of shifting cultivators experiences strain with the growth of population and, consequently, exhaustion and contraction of forest land available for cultivation. It results in reduction of the fallow period, more intensive cultivation, for example, of the third patch, and a change in the pattern of distribution of communal land. As distinctly seen from our study, distribution of land on the basis of family labour-power changes into distribution of equal amount of land, irrespective of family labour-power, thus introducing a source of differentiation as the pressure on land builds up. The compulsion to intensify the use of



land ultimately leads to preparation of land for settled agriculture. Simultaneously the production process and technological apparatus undergoes a transformation.

This transition from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture takes place with the background of a system of stratification on the basis of the original settlement and migration pattern of the respective villages. Village elites, generated on this basis, devise mechanisms of appropriating surplus labour of others and take control over the best lands, both for shifting cultivation and settled agriculture, as seen in the case of Biringapur and Mishapur.

Thus we find that the transition from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture is inevitable, irrespective of any external factors. As the process of peasantisation advances through this mechanism, the tribal communities become increasingly differentiated. However, interference on the part of the colonial government in contracting the land available for shifting cultivation by dividing the forest into 'reserved' and 'khasra', impeding the production process by restricting the burning of forest in preparation for shifting cultivation to only a day in a year and increasing the pressure on production by imposing land revenue accelerated the transition. The 'stick' was aided with the offer of 'carrot' in terms of revenue-free cultivation of newly prepared settled land, free

seed, metal implements and draught animals. Such a policy was carried out via the internal structure, i.e., through the king of Bamra state, who presented himself as a "modernizer". This same policy was continued by the government of Independent India, as seen clearly in the establishment of village Sarkarpur in 1952.

As the tribal communities "advanced", they attracted outsiders who were lured by their labour, forest produce, domestic animals and potential for trade and moneylending. The Bhuiyans make themselves accessible when the outsiders establish the ritual ceremonial friendship with them. This relatively egalitarian relationship is craftily and gradually transformed into an inegalitarian patron-client relation through which 'friendly gifts move primarily one way i.e., away from the Bhuiyans. Interestingly, as the Bhuiyans themselves get increasingly differentiated, their relationships within the community tend to look increasingly like the patron-client relations. Differentiation and, therefore, contradictions within the Bhuiyans make entry of the outsiders more smooth. Gradually the Bhuiyan community begins to look like the "advanced" tribals and non-tribals of the adjoining plains. They share the process of depeasantisation with these latter communities.

The process of depeasantisation can be seen clearly in our villages of Chaasapur and Sarkarpur. Here, the process is akin to other agrarian communities in underdeveloped countries. It is pauperisation rather than proletarianisation which is taking place.

The Bhuiyans had come to Chaasapur and Sarkarpur to prepare land for settled cultivation in the plains. However, they have lost nearly all the settled land to the non-tribal chasas, who also operate as money-lenders. The Bhuiyans, like other tribals or non-tribals in similar position, continue to prepare waste land for cultivation. The chasa landowners-cum-moneylenders, on the one hand, are not interested in the low-yielding wasteland and, on the other, do not wish to alienate the Bhuiyans from all land. Thus the poor Bhuiyans, like the poor non-Bhuiyan tribals and non-tribals, remain tied down to small land-holdings of poor quality and provide a source of cheap labour for the chasas. The poor of Chaasapur and Sarkarpur, not completely liberated from land and, therefore, unable to emigrate to join the ranks of the proletariat, remain in a condition for the chasas to continue to operate as moneylenders.

The larger process of "development" at the regional and national level is, however, knocking at the doors of Chaasapur and Sarkarpur. Chasa kinsmen, displaced from the Rengali Dam

Project located about 60 kms. away and carrying compensation money in their pockets, are hungry for land - land of any quality. These new developments now threaten the poor of the two villages, including the Bhuiyans, with total alienation from land. The increasing pressure tends to dissolve the tribal identities, and class perceptions are beginning to emerge. The reverberations of this situation have already reached back to Biringapur and Mishapur, where the Bhuiyans are gradually refusing to enter into ceremonial friendships which, in fact, are more like patron-client relations. Indeed, this will have significant implications for social relations within the structure of hill communities of the Bhuiyans.

Our study has serious implications for policy measures for tribal welfare. We have seen that the transition from shifting cultivation to settled agriculture is inevitable, irrespective of any external stimuli. However, increasing differentiation and pauperisation accompany this process of peasantisation. Therefore, simply driving the shifting cultivators towards settled agriculture, in the name of 'development' cannot be called tribal welfare. It impoverishes them both economically and culturally.

Consequently, it is desirable to carry out more intensive studies of tribal communities in order to devise

mechanisms of governmental or non-governmental interference to utilize the egalitarian structure and spirit of shifting cultivators in making transition to settled agriculture. It may be much easier for such communities to adopt cooperative agriculture. We need many experiments and more studies to evaluate those experiments so as to arrive at a harmonious pattern of development.

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